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RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

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THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
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I

LIFE AND CERTAINTY

THERE is an ever-recurring debate in theology as to the seat and nature of religious authority. In our day, especially, there has been strenuous attack upon the claim of absolute infallibility as set up for the various sources of religious revelation. The doctrine of an infallible Church has been assailed by repeated setting forth of the very glaring fallibilities in the history and present practice of the Church which most persistently claims infallibility. The believers in an infallible Book have not been successful in replying to the contentions of historical criticism that the Bible is so much a product of the times in which it was written that it cannot be looked upon as literally binding for later times. Modern psychology and the comparative study of religions have robbed unusual inner experiences of much of their authoritative impressiveness. If we fall back upon dogmatic creeds

as inexorable deliverances of reason we hear that even a chain of logic is no stronger than its weakest link, and that some of the links of the creed are sheer assumption. When we insist that conscience, at least, is infallible we learn that this doctrine can be only formally true; that the concrete duties of a particular hour can be arrived at only by processes of reasoning which are far from infallible. We are even told that the Christian love "which never faileth" now and again lands some believer in aberration rather than in unshakable certainty.

It is the opinion of the writer of this essay that the debate on religious authority cannot come to a satisfactory conclusion as long as absolute, technical infallibility is sought for. Religion is preëminently a matter of life, and in life absolute infallibility plays small part. Terms like absolute infallibility have only intellectual significance, and rather barren intellectual significance at that. We mistakenly emphasize infallibility through failing to hold fast the fact that the mind has other contents besides the strictly intellectual. The

same agent that thinks also feels and wills, and feels and wills at the same time that it thinks. The stream of consciousness at any one moment is not the crystal-clear river that the intellectualist would like to see. The stronger the stream the more it resembles other streams in its ability to bear along matter which if left to itself, so to speak, might sink from sight. Consciousness is on-rushing force.

Since the mind realizes itself as a whole, though perhaps predominantly now in one form of activity and now in another, it would seem that reasonable certainty ought to satisfy the mind as a whole. Inasmuch as the mind seldom relies upon strict argument, sole reliance upon strict argument as a basis of religious certainty would seem to be of doubtful wisdom. We must move out from the realm of infallibility into that of practical certainty.

Again, we must not only insist upon a whole mind whose demands for certainty are to be satisfied, but we must insist upon certainty of the same kind as that for which we seek in real life—the certainty that comes out of life and

that issues in life. The mind lives upon its belief, just as the body lives upon bread and water and air. Life is first, and formal reasoning second. The body finds itself in possession of certain appetites and, if left to itself, consumes whatever seems to give promise of satisfying the needs. Experience shows that some foods are better than others, but the appetite and its satisfaction come first, and the discussion as to the food afterward. In any case, the proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof. So it is in the beliefs of a man. The origin of the belief may be somewhat obscure, but the man believes a particular belief because he finds satisfaction in the belief. The belief may be very poor, but the belief is ordinarily held fast as long as it satisfies. If we ask the ordinary man why he eats bread and meat and fruit we may puzzle him very sadly. We may make quite an impression upon him by telling him of other and better sorts of food, and we may expatiate quite at length on the absurdity and risk of taking food into the delicate tissues of the system without being able to give a formal reason for so doing.

The argument, however, is not apt to hold its force through the dinner hour.

The above statement seems to be true to life so far as the individual man is concerned. It is also true as far as groups of men are concerned. We may vary our manner of expression somewhat, and, dropping biological and physiological terms, say that the principle by which the minds of groups actually proceed in religious thinking is somewhat akin to the principle of eminent domain. A nation which has an eye to its own self-preservation has no hesitancy in appropriating to itself sites suitable for forts; or it takes lands for roads or seizes grounds for parks. The nation does this by the exercise of an inherent right to make provision for the good of the whole of its people. The seizure comes out of the demands of the growing life of the nation. Whatever ministers to that life the nation looks upon as having the right of way. In a larger sense civilization proceeds by what might be called the exercise of humanity's right of eminent domain. Wars are undertaken which are really seizures of lands in the name of the best

use to which those lands can be put. It would be inconceivable that the Indian, for example, should be allowed final possession of North America. No doubt many grievous crimes have been committed in reliance upon this principle of eminent domain, but humanity's conscious or unconscious movement toward the fulfillment of deep life cravings has been in large part the real history of civilization.

In a similar way the mind moves in the conquest of religious truth. The driving force is not logical merely, but rather the pressure of the whole life for conceptions which shall satisfy the life. The life takes by assumption what it feels it must have, and it holds fast the assumptions as long as they are satisfactory. If a certain world conception is like a strategic fortress for the protection of spiritual life we seize it and hold it as long as it commands the field. If another conception seems to be a veritable highway toward intellectual peace we seize it and hold it as long as we can travel over it. If still another idea seems to be fitted to be part of humanity's spiritual park system we insist upon having it as long as it keeps its

freshness and beauty. In so far as the ideas minister to fullness and richness of the highest life we believe them to be true. We do not look upon ourselves as so made that assumptions which minister to spiritual wealth can lead us to delusion or illusion. In all this the aim is not absolute and technical infallibility of revelation, but practical religious certainty. We learn the truth by venturing to assume it as true and living as if it were true.

But we must steer clear of figures of speech and keep to plain fact. Let us speak, then, in the language of fact:

Belief is a fact. However it has come about, people do believe. From the beginning they make assumptions and venture out upon them in the confidence that they shall not be led astray. They trust themselves and their neighbors and the world around. They believe in the unseen by a kind of instinct. When they do this they are not indulging in any merely passive floating on the wings of fancy. The mind is never more alert than when it thus trusts. Belief in our fellows often prompts us to the exercise of most extraordinary powers.

The more we believe in men, the more we are willing to do for them. The more we believe in the unseen and the God of the unseen, the more we are willing to do for that God. It is a mistake to think of belief as a quiet sitting still and doing nothing. Belief is the energy of the soul shown in intense seizures and determined grasps. Belief calls forth vast activities.

Belief becomes all the more wonderful when we see how stubborn it is. The belief flourishes most just when we think it ought to flourish least. The people will go on believing in the God of the unseen even when he shows himself most inscrutable. Men will with a willing spirit endure more from their God than they will ever take from one another. Like the patriarchs, they will continue seeking for a city with foundations in the face of the blackest disappointments. They will wander about over the desert looking for something more stable than the tent which has to be struck every night, something more secure than a tent-pin, seeking for an eternal city, and will die without having obtained the promise and

yet die in the faith. They will believe in God in spite of misunderstood promises and cast all upon him most trustfully just when to all outward appearances the chances against them are as a million to nothing.

The belief of men in the unseen is not only a fact, and a stubborn fact, but it is a fact which leads to beneficent consequences. If we are to say that belief in itself is no argument we have to explain why it is that the real tides of largest health seem somehow to depend on the trust of men in the unseen. When men have confidence in one another we know how well the business of the country prospers. When the credit is shaken by ever so little we know something of the disaster which follows. Credit is a mighty agency for unlocking and loosing the industrial forces. Likewise in the larger relations of life we get on by a trust, conscious or unconscious, in the unseen forces around us. We bring to the plea for religious belief the same kind of argument which the men seeking to restore prosperity in a time of commercial crisis bring to the side of credit, namely, that everything will fall to pieces

without belief. The pleader for credit does not justify himself by long appeals to metaphysics; he simply declares that credit is something we must have if we are to live. So with belief. We believe in belief for the sufficient reason that belief works. It helps us to get on. We feel that we attain to good terms with the universe by trusting the universe and the God whom we assume to be back of it. We take belief as the normal and natural function of the soul, as natural as breathing, and we keep on trusting till reason for doubt appears. There are perhaps separate moments in our lives when in particular situations we have to doubt, just as there are occasionally noisome and pestilent odors which we escape by holding our breath; but believing is the natural function, and we shall die if we hold our breath too long. We seize truths by faith and hold them fast, for the simple reason that we feel that we shall die in the best part of our lives if we cannot have these truths. We cannot believe that truths which nourish us so healthfully are poison. We do not claim that this is proof of the kind that will satisfy the

professional logician, but it is sufficient warrant for the reasonable life. In the main and on the whole we believe that we can trust our spiritual appetites. We take what they call for.

Suppose we were to give up the general fundamental beliefs about God and man which are the essence of Christianity. Let us say that we are creatures of the dust alone; that we came forth as the result of a blind process, and that we shall die after a little by the same process; that there is no God, and really no man—only a happy combination of material elements. Now, while it is open to individual thinkers here and there to hold this creed, it will not do for many of us to hold it at the same time. As a shrewd thinker has pointed out, we cannot allow runs on our stock of beliefs any more than we can allow runs on our banks. Society would speedily find itself in a desperate plight if large bodies of men began to withdraw their belief deposits. The underlying conceptions which uphold business and law and the dignities of social intercourse would soon tremble. On the other hand,

society will be benefited by larger and larger deposits of belief accounts. Such deposits in general make for the enlargement of human life here and now. We will not believe that this result comes of a false process. We believe in our beliefs for the same reason that we believe in a successful investment: the investment pays. If we are creatures of the dust the strange fact follows that that very realization throws us out of sympathy with the dust. If, on the contrary, we can believe that the dust is one of the manifestations of a Mind back of all things, and that every floating mote has come into existence at the will of a Lover of power and knowledge and beauty, we can see the dust transformed till it shimmers with spiritual suggestiveness; but if we are dust and nothing more the dust seems strangely terrible to us. No, faith in the unseen is the pathway to sympathy even with the things that are seen.

Or suppose we surrender our belief in immortality. It may be permissible for the individual thinker here and there to do this, but large bodies of men must not withdraw

this belief all at once, for forthwith the restraining influence would be lifted from many wills that sadly need restraint. The assumption that this world is all leads to a fiercer scramble for the things of the immediate present. The friendship that seemed dignified with the prospect of continuance in some larger sphere becomes fleeting and inconsequential. The opportunity for the service of God and man forever is taken away. We lose our sense of being at home here; and it is the loss of this sense of being at home that counts. We are bound to make this world conform to our spiritual needs. We will not yield to any view which makes us strangers. If we find that belief in God and man and the unseen makes for larger life we shall hold fast to that belief. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. It is the force that puts us into harmony with the universe. We will not believe that the truth is to remove us more and more to a distance from the centers of meaning and of life.

The final test is the test of life. Belief brings life, and by doing so witnesses to the

truth of the ideas to which it points. We do not mean that we are to believe what is merely pleasant for us, or to befool ourselves in the presence of facts by shutting our eyes, but we do believe that whatever makes for the largest and highest life of the whole man is by that very life bearing witness to its truth. If belief makes the mind keener, if belief makes the heart more willing to bear the cross of self-sacrifice, if belief unlocks powers of the will hitherto unsuspected, we shall hold that the belief itself is an evidence of the unseen to which it points. Any institution, any creed has to be judged finally by the kind of life it produces. The conceptions which the life progressively reaches after to nourish its deeper needs are by the very fact that they are shown to be necessary shown by the same fact to be at least on the way toward truth. The life of belief develops the aggressive instinct to expansion, to repeated seizures of fresher and fresher truth. If the lives of men have been reaching from the beginning out into the unseen for spiritual food how do we know that they have found anything out there? By the

very fact that the lives have been nourished and quickened into health and strength and beauty. Our beliefs are like the merchant ships that drop down below the horizon toward the tropic lands. We have never been to the tropics ourselves, but we know the lands are there because of the food which the ships bring back. If souls throughout the ages reach out into the unseen for food the very fact that the saints have flourished is an indication that their hands have not closed upon a void. A man now and then may nourish himself with a delusion, but not so generation after generation. We will hold that it takes something more than the nothingness of empty air to feed the intensest force of which we know, the force of a hungry soul.

The thought of the branch and the vine comes to us. How does the branch show its connection with the vine? By its impulse to expand and flower and bear fruit. The belief of the soul comes of the life of the soul. If the belief dies it dies because some fine arteries and veins are clogged. The part which lacks belief is dying through impoverished sap

supply. Progressive doubt means progressive decay. It means lack of connection with the flowing life which in belief streams in from some other world. This, in a word, is the method of Christian belief—we insist that the belief is a fact to be accounted for, that it is a fact laden with health for men, that it must point to reality in view of the increasing satisfaction to life needs which it brings. A formal reasoner may take offense at the logic, but the logic is the logic of real life everywhere. We trust whatever makes for life. Belief makes for life. It is therefore in itself the evidence of things not seen. It is the purpose of this essay to emphasize the claim that Christianity leads to certainty by deepening and enriching the life; that out of this enlargement comes the demand for advancing religious conceptions; that this demand has the right of way; that the certainty which follows the carrying out of the assumption is our highest warrant for believing the assumption true; that the path of progress in religious thinking is through making the most of our religious assumptions, and through putting upon them

the largest interpretations which they will bear.

We pause to consider the objections which already swarm to utterance against the method thus summarily stated. In the consideration of the objections the meaning of the method itself will become clearer.

II

THE OBJECTIONS OF COMMON SENSE

THE first objection comes from the practical man and is urged in the name of common sense. He tells us that our plan means nothing more or less than that a man should shut his eyes and believe what he pleases. The practical man insists that our view is nothing but self-sophistication—if a belief is good for us we are to hold it fast. This is to do in the realm of thinking what many people are trying to do in the realm of practice—blink at the tough inevitableness of the actual system and look only at what is pleasant. Such thought is sooner or later doomed to a fearful smash in a head-on collision with reality. The plain man of common sense maintains that the important question in religion, as everywhere else, is: What are the facts?

In reply we urge that we are looking for the facts just as truly as is the common-sense objector; and we insist, in turn, that the objector shall not overlook the facts. Espe-

cially must he not overlook the fact whose importance we have been emphasizing—the presence of belief in the world, the tenacity of belief, and the beneficial consequences which follow belief. Of course, it is open to the common-sense objector to maintain that many troublesome consequences follow belief, and he may refer to swarms of aberrations. We are talking, however, about the great catholic convictions of Christianity—the proneness of men to believe in the God revealed in Christ, the dignity of man and the worth of life as taught by Christianity. There could seem to be in the main but little doubt as to the consequences of such beliefs. The man of common sense can hardly have lot or part in this matter until he is willing to think of the significance of belief as fact.

We might urge, further, that even the most ordinary seeing depends not only upon the eye, but upon the mind back of the eye, and upon the demands of that mind. To an extent greater than we ordinarily think we see what we are looking for. We do not insist upon this point, however, but rather

protest against the charge that we shut our eyes upon the facts. We have said that we wish to satisfy the demands of our total nature—including our power to see the facts. If we blinded ourselves we should hardly be satisfying the demands of our total nature. We call for the most open-eyed and steady gaze upon the facts. Still, in interpreting and arranging our facts we insist upon some sort of perspective. Not every fact is to be put on the same plane as every other fact. Among the facts of our lives is this tendency to make the largest and best assumptions we can; and we maintain that this is the important fact. A man stands beside the dead body of his child. Here are the facts—the dead body and the open grave. But are these all? Hardly; within the man is an inner protest against these facts as being final. That protest is also a fact. If the father goes forth on the assumption that his child still lives and is in the keeping of a good God we look upon the resulting satisfaction and the resulting enlargement of the father's life as a witness to the truth of his belief.

We declare that our method is just the method of any common sense that even half understands itself. It is the method by which we get on. We trust our friends, assuming the best concerning them till reason for doubt appears—that is to say, till life on that assumption is no longer satisfactory. Every practical experiment proceeds on assumption. We maintain that we must bring out into the light this essential procedure and recognize it as authoritative in religious thinking. We cannot subscribe to a method which blinks at even one fact. We do insist, however, that the life back of the interpretation of the fact shall be made as deep and full as possible, for with the resulting depth and fullness come demands which are authoritative prophets of the truth. Beliefs are outcomes and results. They are caused in us by life processes and are, in turn, the cause of further life. They stand finally in their own right not merely because bodies of facts compel us to hold them, but they stand in their own right in the same way that life itself stands. They come as the mark of the instinct of intellectual and moral self-preser-

vation. The enlarging of the life means the enlarging of the belief. The mind must have more and more room. Some beliefs fail not because there are not facts to support them, but just because the beliefs themselves are not big enough. The soul is bound to make a place for itself. Of course, it is easy to sneer at this conception and say that it is rather flabby intellectual procedure which tells us to believe what is good for us, but if we make "what is good for us" wide enough we have the only worthy method. We live in a day which lays great stress on the survival of the fittest, and we believe that the principle holds in the realm of belief as elsewhere. In fact, our very belief in the survival of the fittest rests finally on a belief that the fittest ought to survive. We cannot tolerate a universe in which the unfit are to monopolize the success in living. The impulse to seize the view which our principle of eminent domain calls for is for us the all-essential fact. It is for us the sign of spiritual life, as truly as the impulse to national expansion is a sign of national life.

The man of common sense keeps insisting,

however, that he must know if there is really anything "out there." We reply that this is the very question we are trying to answer. There seems to be no way of going directly "out there" to see if there is objective reality corresponding to our religious beliefs; the only way is to see what is "in here," in the way of vitality as a consequence of religious beliefs. No doubt there is a difference between the object of religious belief in itself and that object as held in our thought, but if we find that enlarging religious belief is followed by enlarging life we shall hold that our minds are in the path to truth. We will not have it that a belief which lifts us out of ourselves and beyond ourselves comes merely from ourselves. We must have some deeper cause.

We insist that our argument is merely common sense. We account for faith in the unseen by assuming that the unseen world somehow gets in contact with minds and makes itself believed in. We believe that the unseen is at work in causing men to believe because we do not find anything among the things seen to account for faith. Strong as

the material forces are, they are not strong enough to make us think that they cause our belief in God. And we do not make faith ourselves, for it comes upon us in spite of ourselves. We cannot completely shake ourselves loose from it. If we give up believing in one kind of unseen we end in believing in another. Believing is as unescapable as breathing. Faith, then, is a fact—an actual exercise of the whole life in response to some stimulus that comes upon us from somewhere. We do not prove that the stimulus comes from the God of the unseen, but we assume that it does and see how the assumption works in life, and the assumption works well.

To use another figure of speech, and this time an old, old one, the response of the soul to the unseen forces is like the response of the needle to the pole. The pole throws the needle into a state of immense activity. If the needle could come to consciousness and go to reasoning it might reflect upon the fact that it felt this irresistible impulse, and upon the farther fact that when the impulse was allowed to have full sway it made the force of the needle

stretch in one direction. A circle of needles around the earth all pointing toward one spot would indicate the presence of something at that spot to give the needles their direction and draw forth their magnetic activities. Such reasoning needles might not be able to travel toward the magnetic pole, but they could locate pretty exactly the whereabouts of the pole from the set of their own experiences. A circle of souls around the earth or across the ages, all pointing in one direction when the spiritual impulse which results in the attitude which we call faith is allowed to have full sway, is an indication of the reality of the Unseen Spirit. We have sensibleness enough to believe that the good impulses of lives of highest and most intense activity, even the activity of faith, are not lining themselves up around nothing. We do not believe that the needles of the compasses on land and sea are arranging themselves with dress-parade precision around a powerless empty space in the north. Faith is the pointing of a life. Its pointing out toward an unseen is an indication that there is something out there which draws

out its power. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. We believe in the reality of the unseen because we believe. Not much of an argument from the standpoint of formal reasoning, but a part of the good sense by which we make ourselves at home in the universe.

III

THE OBJECTIONS OF THE SCIENTIST

If a scientist could have heard this discussion thus far he would no doubt have been vastly amused at the desperately unscientific character of our procedure. He would have been very speedily convinced that the moment a man begins a theological discussion he forthwith parts company with all those whose mental steps are taken with any degree of scientific circumspection. A word with the scientist, then, may not be out of place.

Why should there be any science? To answer this question with a reference to the great practical benefits which have come with scientific discovery will hardly suffice in view of the fact that the greatest scientists have very often not thought of practical results at all. The scientists have been driven and consumed by an enormous scientific curiosity. By the very make of their minds they have been determined to ask why until they found

out why. The assumption that we must have even a scientific explanation of the universe is a good deal of an assumption. As a matter of fact, the scientist is one of the most passionate assumers we know. He is simply bound to make a place in life for orderly knowing, and will go to any length to seize and master facts.

The great scientific principles have been won by the exercise of a right of intellectual eminent domain. We will not discuss such abstruse matters as the atomic theory, for example, with its agreement upon atoms as convenient theoretical creations which the mind holds as resting places in spite of the contradictions which make their nests in them. Take rather the principle which we call the uniformity of nature. Without attempting a formal definition, we may say that the essential meaning of this principle seems to be that there are no breaks in the operation of natural law. Is this a principle with which a mind passive in the presence of the facts would inevitably be impressed? Is there so little chaos in the observed order of nature that the

observer finds the thought of uniformity irresistible? The sun rises every day, to be sure; the seasons advance in a more or less orderly procession, and organic changes seem to take place according to a somewhat rhythmic ebb and flow; but this is not all the story, by any means. Many events seem shot at us from a gun, the gun in the hands of a rather irresponsible sportsman at that. In the realm both of the organic and the inorganic the most unlooked-for events, apparently the most freakish occurrences, are continually happening. To go no further than the weather for illustration, do the changes all suggest inevitably the uniformity of nature? The scientist might respond that a break in the connection as we see it does not mean a break in the continuity of the underlying law. He might point out to us that the earth might at any moment collide with a comet and be dissipated into gas in a fraction of a second. Here we would have the greatest imaginable break in the chain of events and no break at all in the underlying laws which govern cometary and planetary movements and the destructions through shock

and heat. We reply, however, that we are not dealing with underlying principles evidently reached by an involved process of scientific reasonings, but with the facts as they report themselves to the so-called passive observer; and we say that in these there is not enough to warrant a claim that the principle of the uniformity of nature is reached by presuppositionless observation.

If the uniformity of nature is not always clearly discernible in the succession of events is it one of those self-evident axioms whose obviousness makes it folly to speak of them as assumptions? Hardly. For anything which we can see to the contrary, a cause might be followed now by one effect and now by another, and that with the circumstances precisely similar in the two cases. This might be true if the world-cause be thought of as either material or spiritual. If materialism is accepted we can hardly bind matter to act always in the same way under the same circumstances unless we have some indubitable assurance to that effect, which under the circumstances could hardly be expected. If

spirit is accepted as the world-cause our own inner experience would suggest to us that a spiritual cause might under similar circumstances in two cases follow now one course and now another. For all we know *a priori,* the universe may be the disconnected, incoherent ejaculations of a mind staggering along under the law of association.

What, then, is the truth about the uniformity of nature? Just this: there is a measure of observable regularity in nature. With the awakening of the intellectual spirit the regularity rather than the chaos is seized upon as expressing the deepest truth, and this just to satisfy an imperious intellectual need. Then uniformity is assumed even in the situations most lawless in appearance, and the clue to the law sought for with a grim persistency. The mind will not have a lawless universe. The scientist proceeds with the principle of the uniformity of nature simply because he is bound to have it. He holds it because it satisfies him.

Assumptions, then, come out of the scientific temper. Assumption underlies not only the

general procedure of the scientific thinker, but marks very definitely his dealing with many classes of specific facts. Suppose we have before us a body of facts about whose objective reality there can be no question and the only point at issue is as to the interpretation of the facts. Here are two scientific physicians contemplating precisely the same set of facts about a patient. Let us suppose that the examination of the patient has been complete. The doctors have all the facts obtainable. One doctor interprets the fact in one way and the other in another way, with correspondingly different recommendations as to treatment. One may pronounce the patient at the point of death, and the other may find nothing in his condition but what may be easily set right. So two scientists look upon nature. One pronounces nature to be acting in a way which calls for no improvement, while the other pronounces nature sick unto death. The difference here is between the backlying assumptions, assumptions which are all the more potent through the fact that they are hardly suspected by their holders.

The above illustration has to do with interpretation of patent facts which cannot be doubted. If there is any chance for emphasis on the facts which support his thought we may find one of the doctors putting such stress upon the aspects favorable to him that the other facts are altogether ignored. If there is the slightest opportunity we shall find one doctor or the other going on to "pick and sort" from the facts. Then there is no limit to the conclusions that may be reached. The truth is that the scientific investigators in all spheres carry with them sets of intellectual tastes and appetites which are responsible for unconscious assumptions. The investigator may never have formulated his thought of the values of different kinds of truth, but he has a scale of relative values, nevertheless, whose subtle and unconscious force is incalculable. Take the one thought as to the significance of human life. If the specialist in any branch looks upon the higher spiritual interests of the true human life as of no consequence, or as of so little consequence, for example, that the system of material things is not to be looked

upon as in any way secondary or subsidiary, we shall know about what to expect. We shall at least have a different result from that of the believer in the inherent value and dignity of the human soul.

The force of this something which we call the spirit of the investigator is indeed marvelous. We are all inevitably under its influence. Who of us could be brought to believe in witchcraft as an explanation of any facts? Evidence enough might be produced. Evidence enough was produced in another day to convince impartial and learned judges that witches had been at work. We have discovered no facts which make the existence of witches an impossibility. Still, we do not believe in them and we will not believe in them. The intellectual life has so enlarged —we are so under the sway of a new set of intellectual demands—since the day of witchcraft that we will not reopen that case; and this is about all we can say. Or take the matter of spiritistic communication with the dead through "mediums" as it is put before us to-day. We must all admit that the great

difficulty before the believer in spiritualism is to get us to listen to him. Our atmosphere is against him. It may be an arid atmosphere begotten by scientific hostility to the belief in the realm of the unseen, or it may be the foggy atmosphere of doubt as to the persistence of soul beyond death, or it may be the cloudy atmosphere which prefers to have some things left in mystery, or it may be the storm-laden atmosphere of wrath against previous impostors. Whatever the cause, the task before the member of the Society for Psychical Research is to create a friendly intellectual atmosphere.

In all our actual reasoning very few questions are settled by strict evidence. Habits and expectations and prejudices play the decisive part. In his subjection to these influences the scientist himself must abandon all claim that his method is strictly without assumption. The scientist cannot shake himself loose from this essentially human characteristic of reasoning simply by passing beyond the laboratory door. It would be as impossible for him to carry on his investigations in

an intellectual vacuum free from all passional influences as for him to live without air. He carries swarms of assumptions with him—assumptions, too, which he is at no pains to adjust with the conflicting assumptions of other specialists—and he is surrounded by an atmosphere which makes it necessary for him to rely upon unconscious assumptions at every step of his way.

We can go further and say that the scientist depends upon assumptions, conscious or unconscious, so completely that in many instances these determine what facts he is to discover. The scientist does not go into the laboratory with a mind passively waiting for the facts to unfold themselves. The inductive method does not by any means consist in a mere chronicling of observed phenomena. We may well believe William James when he says that the impartial passionless investigator is the veriest duffer. To be sure, the student may stumble now and then upon a fact laden with immense suggestiveness, or, sailing, like Columbus, across an unknown sea, he may by merest accident catch a glimpse of the moving

light which reveals the nearness of land; but, making all allowance for exceptions, we have to declare that science has its strength not in a colorless impartiality, but in a passionate prepossession and prejudice and demand. To borrow a hint from Walter Bagehot, we must find the forcefulness of the inductive method to lie in the suspicion that certain factors are "guilty" of certain results. The scientist shadows the suspected forces and hunts for evidence against them. Of course, there are many factors against which a particular accusation will not hold, but the failure to bring a case at one place will only lead to a livelier tracing of clues in another direction. The scientist is really nature's detective, and the whole mental coloring which grows out of his experience as an investigator comes in decisively to the interpretation of each detail. He is looking for something in particular, and his whole course of action is based on the assumption that that something exists and that it can be run down and caught. Columbus did not expect to discover America, but he expected to discover something in particular, and he

would never have sailed if he had not been driven by the force of unverified assumptions.

When enough facts have been secured to transform the general and perhaps vague expectation into a carefully formulated theory, the theory itself enters the investigator's mind as part of the assumption with or from which he works. He then knows all the more definitely just the result at which he expects to arrive. There is abundant search to-day for facts confirmatory of the theory of evolution. The evolutionist knows pretty well what he is looking for. He suspects a realm of nature to be guilty of events which will lend aid and comfort to the current doctrine. He lays snares for these accomplices and decoys them into the desired revelation. If the missing links are ever all found, and the progress upward shown with no step left untraced, it will be because the scientist has known just what to look for. The scientist no more thinks of discovering facts in general than the inventor thinks of making machines in general. Each strives at something definite—the inventor at a submarine boat or a flying

machine, and the scientist at a new planet or a new microbe. Scientific certainty is largely the satisfaction of an imperious demand. It is not merely a matter of the objective facts. Some facts are ignored, others given an emphasis out of all proportion to their apparent significance. The scientist of all men ought not to say that he never exercises the right of intellectual eminent domain. What is that "constructive imagination" of which the scientist makes so much but an inner discernment sharpened by insatiable scientific cravings?

IV

THE OBJECTIONS OF THE EVOLUTIONIST

At this point the evolutionist appears, professing to be in hearty accord with much that we have been trying to say. He thinks, however, that he could say better what we have evidently been aiming at. His test of truth is survival, or utility, or adjustment of inner relations to outer relations. He demurs against our insistence upon the subjective element in scientific thinking, and declares that his results are reached by simply reading off the teachings which are upon the very face of the system of things.

We on our part express the most cordial good will toward the evolutionist. We do wish, though, that evolutionary terms had a more definite meaning than any we can find from the writings of their interpreters, so that we could really find out just how much agreement there is between their thought of sur-

vival and utility and adjustment and our idea of life-giving power as a test of truth. The historic fact seems to be that Darwin and those of his day started a great thought movement which is yet moving and which has seen enormous changes since its first announcement. The catchwords and even the fundamental viewpoints of the early statements have long since met such modification that they can hardly be looked upon as the same now as in Darwin's time. The doctrine of evolution itself has experienced about as much evolution throughout its career as anything which it has attempted to describe.

We cannot allow the evolutionist's claim that his results have been reached simply by reading off a process. The evolutionist has had the advantage of great inner mental pressures. There could hardly be a more marked instance of the power of a subjective element in shaping theory than the spell which even the word "evolution," hazy as it is, has cast upon the mind of the past two generations. All sorts of sciences, from the study of rocks to the study of religious experience,

have been subjected to all sorts of treatment to bring them into line with the supposed demands of evolution.

If we look closely for the secret of evolution's spell we can find it not only in the positive successes of the theory in various departments of objective science, but also in the satisfaction which it promises to forceful inner necessities. At the very outset the long stretches of time which the theory calls for are attractive. Just as the Copernican system brought a kind of intellectual gratification by furnishing more space beyond us, so evolution has served us by putting more time behind us. We are pleased to think that our pedigree reaches back so far, even if we cannot point with lofty pride to the earliest marchers in the evolutionary procession. Then, the passion for orderliness which is a part of our intellectual equipment is ministered to by the system which marshals so much into ascending series. If we fall to reflecting upon evolution as a satisfaction of the passion for orderliness we may well wonder how much of what we think given by the facts is really so given. Of course,

similarities in the various forms of life around us make it possible for us to classify the forms into species, but a good deal of the making and unmaking of species plays around our own instinct for classification. In nature there is really no such thing-in-itself as species. There are individuals, more or less alike. We put the class term on the individuals so successfully that we often speak as if the class term stood for some actual reality in the outside world. Now, we would not minimize the differences which make it possible to put men and horses into different classes, but still we must insist on the largely subjective character in much of the evolutionists' manipulation of species.

Moreover, the evolutionist has on his side the insatiable craving for simplicity. He promises a formula which will be all-inclusive —and has not the world waited long for such a formula? We come here upon a curious feature of evolutionism. The evolutionist would have us believe that in the world outside of us the movement is from the simple to the complex. The charm of his theory, on

the contrary, is largely in the simplicity at which it arrives. His things move toward the complex but his thought moves toward the simple. When we look at the simplicity we find it to be a simplicity which the mind has forced into its objects, or which the mind has reached by ignoring the complexities. The primal slime may have looked simple, but if it was really simple nothing would have ever come out of it except simple slime. To get beyond slime we have to have something more than slime. The complexity which must have been introduced into simple slime to make it more than slime would have been the essential factor. How we progress by ignoring this factor for the sake of the simplicity is a little hard to see except by remembering that the simplicity comes from a mental demand.

We have no need to go further in this direction. All that we aim to show is that the doctrine of evolution is so dependent upon mental prepossessions and passions that the evolutionist thinker ought to be on his guard lest the theory play a trick on himself. It is especially easy for the evolutionist to come

under the deceptive power of words. This is true also in his emphasis upon the various tests of truth which he finds in his theory. Utility as a test of truth sounds well, but does the evolutionist mean by it what we do, namely, largeness and fineness of life? Is the useful to include also that which gives satisfaction to life apart from the objective consequences involved? A word too about the survival of the fittest. Can we make much use of mere survival as a determining factor in our theorizings? The mere fact of survival is not always decisive, but the biological expression does help us to see the vital character of the process. Much nonsense survives, and it is a good deal like the vermiform appendix in its survival. That is to say, it is so deeply lodged in the social mind that only a perilous surgical operation can get it out. Sometimes the patient dies, not because of the loss of an important organ in the removal of an intellectual survival, but because vital processes had to be disturbed in order to get at a harmful survival. Nonsense survives and manages to complicate itself with good. Then

the phrase about the correspondence of inner relations to outer relations. We like this phrase much, only we wish to see the evolutionists follow more closely the lead of those of their brethren who recognize the power of mind to do more than passively reflect the outside conditions. We should like to see the doctrine lay more stress on the deliberate and purposive adjustment of material situations to spiritual needs. The evolutionist, however, does good service in letting us see that the presumption is with the views which reach farthest into the past. We do not have to subscribe to this or that particular phase of evolutionism to see that in general the fact that a belief has lasted through the years is an indication that there is a truth at its center. Some evolutionists have hardly been consistent with their own doctrine in their ruthlessness against old views, especially old theological views. In spite of excrescences and atrophies here and there, these views survive often because there is something nourishing at their heart. The evolutionist should give more encouragement to the theologian who tries to

find if there is not some method to-day of taking the truth in the old views and giving it more appetizing and nourishing statement—and some method by which we can distinguish the mere survival from the fit survival.

There is a type of evolutionist who looks upon the new as the best putting of truth simply because the new has back of it the longest period of development. This man may have much to say about the Zeitgeist, and feels that the voice of a time is not only a voice of the time but the voice of the past back of it. Very often this is true, but we have to be on our guard against accepting as final truth an ephemeral fancy of the moment. The social organism is as truly subject to mere whims as the individual organism, and we have to distinguish between the morbid craving and the healthy appetite.

We acknowledge our indebtedness in a general way to the evolutionist. We must demur, however, against his putting of the test of truth and against his claim that his system is free from subjective elements, and we have some suspicion of his technical phrases. On

the whole, we think we would better stick to our own test of truth—namely, the ability to satisfy the fullest and highest life of the whole man. We have no doubt that many mean this in the use of evolutionary terms, but so many do not that we would better keep clear of "the survival of the fittest" and other like expressions.

V

THE OBJECTIONS OF THE FORMAL LOGICIAN

By this time the *a priori* logician feels that he must file protest. He points out to us that the mind has direct insight into truth on its own account; that the mind which pretends to any kind of philosophic worthiness proceeds from certain truths which it sees as necessarily true to others which it concludes to be true by the most careful and exacting logic. The road is the highway of apriorism. The method is deductive. The great and all-sufficient instrument is the syllogism. This other method which we have suggested with our phrases about spiritual eminent domain is as loose and inconsequential as any such metaphorical argument is apt to be.

We accede to a measure of force in the position of the apriorist. The mind does see some truths as necessarily true. When such a method as we are trying to expound is ad-

vanced there are always some who claim every thing for it and who insist that even *a priori* truth, so called, is nothing but the long-used assumption which the prehistoric thinkers, if they had really been thinkers, might have recognized as assumptions. We have no patience with such rash desire to rule out the *a priori* as really *a priori*. Of course, what may be *a priori* and self-evident to one mind may be grasped only after a long course of reasoning by another mind; but the apriorist is right in insisting that the mind has direct insight into some propositions as necessarily and inherently true. It would be very hard indeed to make any normal thinker believe that the proposition that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other does not rest on the mind's own power to see. Remember what was said at the beginning of this essay. We are insisting upon the satisfaction of the entire life as a test of truth. We do not intend to ignore the mind's own distinctive interests. We make assumptions in the pursuit of religious truth and we venture out upon these assumptions. If the

assumptions violate the mind's own insights—if the conclusions are logical contradictions—we shall not have reached that satisfaction for which we search. By our own principles we shall be compelled to look in other directions. The final test of the truth is the satisfaction which bears witness of itself.

This, however, must be a satisfaction of the entire life—and here we begin to part company with the rationalist. The rationalist forgets that the formal logical principles play very little part in real life. In the spheres of mathematics and mechanics and in some branches of physics the *a priori* method will do very well, yet even here the *a priori* principles are often most powerful in holding before the mind an ideal of sun-clear, self-evident system which the mind pursues unrelentingly. The apriorist feels that at the center all must be logic, and he works passionately for that center. He is driven by an intellectual need. He forgets, however, that life is more than logic, and that there are other driving necessities besides the formally logical.

If the upholder of the strictly *a priori* method thinks that the syllogism is the chief force in the creation of the philosophic systems which have laid hold on the minds of men he is far from complete mastery of the truth. Some systems have indeed been severely logical, but others which have come to very wide vogue have hardly been logical at all. We have to concede large historic effectiveness to the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, for example, in any consideration of the thought movements of the last forty years. If we look for the secret of this force in any superior worth of Spencer's system from the standpoint of its logical validity we shall soon find ourselves at a good deal of a loss. There are about as many contradictions per chapter in First Principles as could well be found in any production of the human mind making any claim to intellectual respectability. Yet the unmistakable pointing out of the incongruities and inconsistencies had not for a long time the slightest effect in shaking the strength of the Spencerian system. The reason was that the system, with all its glaring faults, satisfied

the demand of the time. The discoveries in the realm of natural science, the weariness with the old rationalistic dogmatisms, the feeling that many statements of religious truth were worn out led to an acceptance of the Spencerian system, contradictions and all. The system fell in with certain desperate needs—needs which were so glad to get hold of anything which seemed at all likely to satisfy that they kept off for a long while any really close logical scrutiny of the new system; or rather they kept the critics from getting an effective hearing.

Instances like this help us to see that the real force in shaping a philosophy is not "pure" intellect, by any means. The will, and not the intellect alone, is to be considered as the compelling force even in philosophy-making. We learn not merely by sitting down and thinking, but also by doing. The great convictions arise out of life—they are the expressions of the demands of life. A change in a philosophic system does not necessarily mean that thinkers are becoming more logical. It may mean that they are doing better living,

rather than better thinking. We repeat that we are not trying to discount the importance of strictly logical procedure. Such procedure is all-important in its own sphere. We do insist that the logical faculty, however, is more an intense and ravenous appetite than a cold and exact machine, and that the strictly logical powers win their greatest triumphs in what they insist upon having. They cast aside system after system in the ruthless demand for what is rationally faultless. We insist, moreover, that the very passion of the logical appetites to seize and hold for themselves everything in sight—and out of sight, for that matter—is a tendency which has to be met and satisfied by demands of the life-centers which lie outside of the field ruled by the syllogism. Men are not only intellect, but feeling and passion. The passionate and affectional and æsthetic aspects of our lives make their imperious demands on the will, and the will assumes whatever beliefs seem most likely to quiet these various demands. At times the will seems to be satisfied with any sort of compromise that will keep the peace,

and at another seems to yield to some one imperious claimant as against all others. The successful claimant is seldom pure logic.

We have no desire to raise metaphysical scruples or quibbles, but we call attention to the fact that strict metaphysical procedure can go only a little way without assumption. Suppose I start from myself and try to find my way to anything beyond myself by strictly and exclusively logical procedure. Of course, I may think that the laws which I find by reflection on my own consciousness will inevitably put me in possession of facts outside myself, but do they? How can I get to the world of things without assumption? Common sense conceives of the world of outside persons and things as indubitably there and as reported infallibly in sense, but there are too many people living under the power of grievous hallucination for us to place absolute reliance upon the human senses. Our own senses often deceive us, and one deception takes the senses out of the grade of infallible witnesses as to outside fact. We are not dealing especially, though, with the reports of sense. We

are rather asking the strict rationalist how he would deduce an outside world from the contents of his own consciousness. The truth seems to be that the mind projects the outside world rather than deduces it. We do not deliberately assume an outside world by a lengthy and involved process of reasoning, but the process is akin to assumption, nevertheless. We project our own thought upon the world, and we have to do so. We say that the thought of questioning the outside world is nonsense, but that does not mean that we can deduce the world. By constitutional necessity the mind thinks an outside world in terms of mind. The question of abstract infallibility of the senses does not arise. If we had to stop to reason through as to whether every man we meet is an illusion or not we should never get ahead. *We must get ahead*—this is the driving force in philosophy as in everything else. The principles of the apriorist are of immense help in clearing up tangles, but they are not the driving forces even in philosophy. The philosophies come out of the great intellectual needs. The needs declare themselves, and the deduc-

tions attempt to bring order into what the needs seize.

This discussion would be incomplete without at least a word of reference to those who call themselves *pragmatists*. By pragmatism is meant that the test of truth is to be found in its usefulness—in its practical consequences when applied to the actual problems of our life. The test is the test of practical success, and the supreme question is, Will it work? The pragmatists have very little patience with self-consistency of the formal logical type as a test of truth, for a lying system might be formally self-consistent and a logically flawless system might not have value enough to hold title to a place in reality. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is looked upon as having worth not only as a test of persons but as a test of beliefs as well. If a belief promises anything the pragmatist says: "Ask not for its pedigree or for its certificate of good standing from the professional logicians and system-inspectors. Simply try the thought and see the practical result."

It can readily be seen that this system is

open to grave charges of incompleteness. True, some have tried to make pragmatism explain everything, even the mind's grasp on mathematical axioms, but the attempt is far from successful unless the word "practical" is widened beyond its ordinary significance and made to include the interests which we have been accustomed to look upon as wholly theoretical. If pragmatism is to be defined in such a way as to include the satisfaction of a mind contemplating advanced propositions in high mathematics and astronomy and physics and chemistry, where these studies have no relation to practical life, we have a use of the word "pragmatism" which is strained and unusual. Suppose we test the doctrine of the pragmatist that only the useful is true, in a very simple way. We live in a world of persons as well as of things. It may well be that nothing of my personal self is useful from the standpoint of the pragmatist, or it may be that there are spheres of activity in which I live which are beyond and apart from those which are of use to the pragmatist. Has the pragmatist, then,

exhausted all the truth about me when he has taken account of the phases of my life which are useful to him? He may reply that he has all the truth about me from his standpoint, but the best part of me may not be visible from his standpoint. Of course, others may see me from different standpoints, and I may know myself with peculiar intimacy, but all the viewpoints together may not give a result for which "useful" is the best characterization. As it is with the individual, so it may be with the world of things. If the pragmatist thinks that he has exhausted the truth of the universe by concluding that only so much of the universe is true as can be used he would seem to have missed the best of it all, unless he falls back upon that strained use of the word "practical" suggested above. This criticism is especially pertinent in view of the fact that the foremost pragmatist in America and the foremost pragmatist in England both hold to a pluralistic view of the universe. According to both thinkers we have all existed in considerable independence from eternity. If this kind of personalism is final philosophy the

knowledge of persons would seem to be about the sum of knowledge. Yet it would be hard to make this knowledge useful on any strictly pragmatist basis.

Another word for this system has been suggested as better than "pragmatism." The word is "humanism." Let the practical consequences be enlarged so as to include all that has to do with a real human interest, and we have what we want, we are told. In that realm of great importance where we may believe if we will, the humanist would have us understand that the mind advances by assuming whatever truth it feels itself to need; that it holds fast to this truth so long as the conception seems to satisfy. When the conception will not satisfy, when the juice has been squeezed out of it, the mind reaches for something else. The humanist would allow us to enlarge the practical consequences of belief to the extent necessary to any such theories as we must have in religious thinking. Humanism enables us first of all to insist that in the consequences the whole man must be taken into the account. We are not to have

a result which will satisfy merely the intellect or the æsthetic or emotional sense alone. The whole man is to be taken as a unit. Humanism has done good service in showing the part of the sub-intellectual and extra-intellectual and super-intellectual elements of our lives upon the strictly intellectual. This influence will explain why it is that the mind will sometimes, indeed often, hold beliefs which can be shown to be faulty from the strictly intellectual standpoint. The mind is a unit and yet is not all one thing. The heart and conscience and intellect must be brought to some sort of agreement, and the result is that the belief which holds the whole life sometimes seems to stand for a sort of compromise among the mental members. The whole of the life must be satisfied.

The word "humanism" too is happy in that it gives play for the great catholic experiences of man. In the matter of religious belief we must not be swayed too much by conceptions which would seem never to be fitted to take hold of the great heart of man. It may be that these conceptions may not yet be such

that men can take them, but they must have the elements that make for catholicity.

Again, the word "humanism" provides for the human as we see it in the highest lives. What are the demands of these lives? Allowing for the apparent contradiction between the demands of the "universal" heart of man and of those separate lives that tower above their fellows like mountain peaks, we still have room to claim that the race is to be judged by its best products, and that the demands of these are to be taken into account in estimating the worth of a particular conception.

After all this help from the term "humanism" we have to pronounce finally, however, that the aid has been largely in the suggestiveness of the term itself. The principal exponents of humanism thus far have spent much time in trying to erect that which can be only a method for reaching truth into a system of philosophy on its own account. They carry their principle so far that they will hardly allow the mind to see anything as necessarily true. Their attacks on the self-evident character of the axioms are uncompromising.

More than this, they entangle their system with a sort of pluralism which leaves everything at rather loose ends. There is nothing in their view which will satisfy the craving for unity which is part of the furnishing of the human mind. More even than this, at least one leading humanist makes the material universe so plastic in the power of the individual persons that it is hard to see how he escapes making the persons the outright creators of the universe. All this can be understood as rebellion against and reaction from the self-sufficiency of the rationalistic absolutists, but such rebellion fails to recognize the driving force of logical passion back of the absolutists, mistaken and extreme as their systems may have been. While expressing our gratitude to the pragmatists and humanists for their splendid emphasis on the extent to which personal needs and will-strivings are the compelling force in the creation of beliefs, we have to leave them with the remark that they have become so badly entangled with dubious systems of metaphysics that their work has to be read very critically and accepted with con-

siderable discount. When they make the satisfaction of the mind's own power to know the test of truth, as they must do in certain realms of mathematics, and then call this the satisfaction of a practical impulse, we feel that a play with words is going on, and that there is little difference between such doctrine and the doctrine of the formal apriorist.

VI

THE MORAL SENSE

At this juncture the believer in the categorical imperative breaks out upon us. However the case may be as regards the formal logician, he declares, we must not forget that we are beings of conscience, that in the inward monitor we have a voice which speaks infallibly. We may often be in doubt as to what is true, but we need not be in doubt as to what is right. In short, we have to meet the objections of the moralists, who maintain that we have in the commands of conscience an intuitively recognized standard to which we must conform. This infallible standard must have far-reaching bearings on the problems of theology.

The discussions which have arisen in recent years largely in connection with the evolutionary hypothesis have provoked a good deal of question as to the absolute infallibility of conscience. We have been shown that many of the convictions which are now firmly part

of the moral understanding of the race were at least not originally the deliverances of an oracularly infallible monitor. Some of them are customs which have received increasingly the sanction of the social groups to such a degree that they now seem direct utterances of the moral reason. Other moral laws which now seem intuitive were reached after long and uncertain processes of debate. Moreover, the history of these ideas not only stands against their being such utterances of an inner oracle as the intuitionalist would have us believe, but the variation of standards among different classes of people is also significant. What may appear to one people the height of villainy may seem to another the height of virtue. Still more, the actual problems of our daily life do not bear out the thought of a technically infallible inward guide. A tramp stands at my door. The obligation is upon me to treat him aright. But what is right? Is it right to give him money, or to send him away empty? Suppose even that I am dealing with my own son. He asks a certain favor of me. Shall I grant it, or shall

I refuse? The inner impulse to do right may throw no light on this particular question. Then the larger questions of business come before me. I may believe just as truly as anyone else that I ought to do right, and I may be striving just as earnestly as anyone else to do right, but the desire throws no light on the question as to whether I shall shut down a branch of the factory or hire more workmen, or as to whether I shall raise or cut wages. And out beyond still lie the vaster questions of social welfare. The statesman most deeply desiring to do right may get no light from his desire as to whether to go to war or to keep the peace; and so on and on through all the list of issues which the statesman has to confront.

The possibility of thus debating every question which has a moral side has led many in our own time to doubt if there is any distinctively moral feeling as such. Conscience is a sort of development of the fear of social censure. We have no sympathy with such a view, but we do believe that moral feeling alone cannot be looked upon as infallible in

the sense in which the intuitionalist uses infallibility. The moral feeling is peculiar to itself. It is a part of all real life and the crown of life, but it alone does not settle particular problems. In all our theorizing we must not forget that we are dealing with a living organism, and that the whole organism must be considered. The organism as such does not thrive on abstract infallibilities, or on infallibilities of any other kind. It has living needs which it satisfies after the manner of life. The moral nature is not a monitor deciding as an infallible judge, but a source of vital power which insists that the moral interests shall be preserved at all costs. The decision as to what the moral life calls for in a particular situation may be another matter. The moral life says "March," but does not always prescribe the direction of the march. The moral purpose demands of our total life that it shall determine what is best in a particular set of circumstances. Thus it comes to pass that in one set of circumstances the moral impulse itself determines us. We cannot tell why we move in a certain direction,

but we move in accord with the demands of moral insight. There are some situations in which the only safety is in immediate action as soon as the question is raised. We are in a sense morally lost if in some crises we stop to debate. At other times we are equally lost if we do not stop to debate. In some cases we are to rule out the question of expediency and in other cases treat the question of expediency as if it were alone important. Moreover, we cannot tell beforehand just how to act in one situation or another. For a man to lie under ordinary circumstances or even to think of lying, is to fall under the condemnation of all good people. Suppose, however, the circumstances are not ordinary. In such circumstances even the best of people divide on the question as to whether a lie is unjustifiable. In dealing with enemies in war, with outlaws, with persons who have no right to the truth, with sick people, there is possibility for a large amount of debate as to the justifiability of an untruth. It is distressing, of course, to have to raise such questions as these, but we raise them just to indicate that infallibility

"under ordinary circumstances" may not be an infallible kind of infallibility. No, the moral realm is exceedingly complex, and no rule can be found which will serve as more than a general statement. We should do right and live according to the Golden Rule, but the right and the Rule carry with them no infallible directions as to what to do in the concrete. They give us the order to march but do not furnish us with a map of the country. At times they do not even tell us what is east and what is west. And life goes on in the concrete.

After we have spoken thus about the moral forces we hasten to repeat that we put them first among the factors which make for the progress of religious thinking. Only we do not treat them as abstractly infallible. We would prefer to speak of their inevitability and their inexorability rather than of their infallibility. The terms which we suggest are life terms. If we were to attempt any statement at all of the moral problem we would say that the moral aim is really toward the highest and fullest life. The moral impulse moves on the assumption that life is so to be

lived and ordered as to lead to the satisfaction of the best in us. Moral pressure demands that even the earthly conditions shall if necessary be made over to satisfy the demands of the highest life. The impulse does not work with any definition of life in hand, but in particular circumstances it raises the moral question and puts all the mental faculties on the search for a solution. The moral impulse does not insist that the life is to be withdrawn from the present world, but it will not hear to submitting to the forces of the present to the exclusion of higher interests. The moral impulse insists on making even the physical conditions such that the higher life can be more easily attained. As another has said, it seeks to make anything like criminal industry unprofitable. We move on the assumption that obedience to the moral impulse will put the race into harmony with its environment, but the adjustment results not through molding the race to the environment but through molding the environment to the race. The moral impulse, we repeat, does not deal with abstractions, but is one of the great driving

forces in the life that now is. We may not be able to define the moral life, but we cannot define any form of life, for that matter. We can recognize the moral life when we see it. We can discern the moral impulse at work in the abolition of slavery, for example; and if we had been present when slavery was first established we might have seen a moral impulse at work in the new system. Enslaving the captives of war was a step forward from slaughtering them. To-day the moral impulse calls for the betterment of all the conditions of human living. Just what betterment is depends upon the report of all our faculties brought to bear upon actual needs. Though tastes and appetites are not abstractly infallible, yet they are the great forces in pushing life along. We can no more tell what betterment will be in advance than we can tell what any life-craving will call for. It is not too much to say that the moral impulse is the impulse of the entire life rightly ruled, moving on toward higher and fuller life, and yet we profess to be as helpless to make any compendious statement as to what the right is in

general, or the higher life is, as we are to describe life at all. In actual situations the whole life makes the adjustment which gives the increased satisfaction.

After we have thus spoken of the force with which the moral impulse rules the present life we must show how it proceeds on certain assumptions as to the realm of the unseen. Since the time of Kant men have understood pretty clearly the force of the moral will in seizing and holding as assumptions the ideas of God and freedom and immortality even though the assumptions may be unconscious. The will to do right limps along rather helplessly if there is no moral governor of the universe. We insist upon God because we have too much of a vacuum if we leave him out. The feeling that we ought must take on the force of a divine personal command if we are to feel its full power and dignity. So with freedom. We cannot demonstrate that we are free any more than we can prove by infallible logic that God exists. For all that we know to the contrary, everything that we think may be the outcome of determined forces. Our

conviction that we are free may be, equally with the conviction that we are not free, the product of a force personal or impersonal which chooses to make sport of us. We cannot tell by formal logic whether the universe is the creation of a sportsman or not. It is possible to believe that we are puppets jerked about by a fun-lover, so far as formal logic is concerned. We will not believe this, however. Our moral sense will not endure such belief. If science cannot prove that we are free we believe in freedom, nevertheless. We take freedom because the moral life demands it. The beliefs in determinism or fatalism thus violently ousted may raise a great outcry about violated logical rights, but we will not heed the outcry. So also with the belief in immortality. The demand for immortality arises not out of selfish desire to live forever, but out of a demand that the moral interests shall not be disregarded and out of the recognition of the worth of moral personality. In these days too we demand immortality as a field for adequate moral service. We desire to have our friends live on that we

may serve them, and we desire immortality for the opportunity of moral service. The desire for immortality will last in society as long as the moral will lasts, and not much longer. Of course, there are morally high-toned individuals here and there who remain true to lofty considerations of duty after they have abandoned faith in immortality, but such persons are often carried along by the impulse of morality bequeathed to them by the past beliefs or by the atmosphere of their time. The moral result of the surrender of the belief in immortality is not to be judged so much by the immediate effect on the life of the man who has surrendered the belief as by the long-run effect on the man whom he has trained not to believe in immortality. By their fruits ye shall know them. The fruits must include the disciples.

More than this still, the moral impulse criticises and improves the beliefs of the theologians. Take the three beliefs which we have mentioned—God, freedom, and immortality. The moral impulse demands that the idea of God shall be moralized. God shall be above

all trace of moral infirmity. Some views of God have made him overanxious about moral insignificances, but as fast as the race comes to better insight more is expected of God. The glory of our moral daring is that we make bold to put the heaviest obligations upon God. As soon as we discover a moral obligation we put it upon God. As soon as we find a new largeness of life we insist that it must be part of the life of God. We make very free with the Almighty, but we do so out of a moral impulse. The moralization of theology is always a great need and a great triumph. We insist too upon the best thought of freedom. Freedom is not an arbitrary lunging about in the dark. It is the self-ordering of the life. As soon as we discover a new moral law we insist that we must freely bind ourselves with it. We know that arbitrariness and selfishness lead to spiritual slavery, and that obligations put upon one's self as fast as they appear lead to liberty. We will have freedom even in the face of that great realm of law of which science makes so much. We even declare that the law is only an elaborate instrument for the use of

freedom. We demand also a moralized idea of immortality. Immortality as mere endlessness is not enough. Whereas the argument as to the quantity of eternal life, so to speak, was once the main point with theology, the question now comes more and more to do with the quality of the immortal life. We cannot believe in an eternity of passivity. We must hold fast to the possibility of a field for large moral activities with an environment more favorable to the growth of moral purpose.

We might continue indefinitely, but we have said enough. All the doctrines of the Church come under the review of the moral understanding. New doctrines, or practically new doctrines, are fashioned because of the demands of the moral life. This life, however, does not act as a technically infallible standard. It acts rather as what it really is, a life pushing and insistent with all the demands of life. It creates certainty by producing conviction rather than by uttering oracles.

VII

THE GREAT OUTSIDE FORCES

WITHIN the past few years careful investigations have given fresh impressiveness to the dependence of the higher faculties of man on the lower. We see with new vividness how closely right thinking is bound to right living and how inevitably an unhealthy brain makes for an unhealthy thought. We have learned anew also how inevitably the race relies for its higher life upon the very earth itself. The geographers and the economists have helped us to understand that before there can be favorable thinking about God or about man there must be a material basis at least measurably favorable. It would be folly to deny that the Christian conception of God is the most valuable thought-possession which the Esquimau can have, but it would be absurd also to maintain that a people living in a night six months long and subsisting upon blubber could enrich the Christian idea of God by

carrying it out to its largest implications. We see in the theologies as we have them the reflection of the ideas of the times in which the doctrines received their first statement. Some phrasings of the idea of God have made God appear as a ruler in an absolutist scheme of government. Such statements can often be traced back to thinkers living in a period when the physical and economic conditions made absolutism in earthly government a necessity. The heavenly government was drawn in terms of the earthly. In a day of ampler individual initiative, on the other hand, there is movement toward democracy, and the freer scope for the individual increases his sense of responsibility for his own salvation. Thus on through the list. The creeds are made on earth. The pictures of the New Jerusalem show a resemblance to the old Jerusalem. The earth suggests more and more for the understanding of heaven. The moral achievements of the race have been mightily helped by physical necessities. New worlds have been discovered not merely because men have found their way through to them in pure scientific

research, but because the cramped quarters of the old worlds have made necessary the discovery of the new. Just as the welfare of the individual man is based upon a friendly physical condition, so the higher life of the race depends in a measurable degree upon the earthly lot of the race. The right attitude toward the great basal physical needs of the race helps us to understand better how the higher achievements become possible.

Now, some have been so far swept away by this truth that they have been compelled to pronounce the higher manifestations *merely* the reflections of the lower. They have made the lower of primary importance, and in fact some have conceived of mind as so bound up with the material accompaniments as to have no power of initiative on its own account. They have missed the fact that the mind has itself discovered the limitations under which it itself has moved, and that the mind has deliberately taken hold of the earth to make it a new earth. When the brain specialist shows us how thoroughly the mind depends on the nerve tissue, and how pressure on this or

that square inch of the brain surface will derange the entire rational life, we wonder not only that this is so, and marvel not only at the brain which is thus important, but also stand awe-struck at the mind which can thus read the secret of the brain. The secret has been grasped not by any passive mirroring of the brain fact in consciousness, but by careful and persistent study on the part of the mind. When the student of the physical forces which affect the career of the race tells us of the vast conclusions toward which the patient study of the facts points, we marvel at the patience which can collect the facts and the skill which can interpret them. The historian reproduces the life of the Middle Ages for us so exactly that we see that there were well-marked physical causes at work which made it absolutely necessary for the broken line of communication between Europe and India to be reëstablished, but that ought not to prevent our seeing the enormous skill and power of the minds which conceived of the world as round and the tremendous daring of Columbus, who sought the East by sailing west. We recognize more

and more the dependence of social and religious progress on the improvement in transportation facilities, especially. Good roads are indispensable in the development of civilization not only because they open up new markets, but also because they provide new possibilities of broadening and humanizing intelligence and sympathy. Now, we would make a serious mistake if we looked upon the movement toward macadam and railroad and steamship as merely the outcome of economic forces working on largely passive human instruments. The imagination is at work in the building of the road. The dream is not merely of new markets. The history of the construction of the strategic roads in the United States, for example, is interesting reading in this respect. Of course, the Cumberland road and the Erie Canal and the Pacific Railroad were built through business necessities, but not through these alone. The appeal to the popular mind in every case touched broader issues and swept along with a kind of imaginative fervor. Dreams of the conquest of the West, of national centralization, of "manifest

destiny," played a mighty part. Take the most important material work before the nation to-day, the construction of the Panama Canal. How absurd to say that business considerations alone are making for the completion of this stupendous enterprise! Financiers even question as to whether the canal will pay, at least for many decades to come, as a strictly business venture. Spiritual forces are at work. The appeal for a more firmly cemented nationality is one. The prophecy of the large place which this country is to occupy in the affairs of the world is another. The vast spell of the Pacific and the Orient is another. Down under all, the more powerful because so dimly recognized and so hard to state in exact terms, is the feeling of the moral obligations of this nation toward the nations which lie beyond Christendom. The religious element may be hard to detect, but it has its effect, nevertheless. All the larger spiritual elements are tinged with the religious. The highway is being seized and held and completed for the large interests of Christianity, and will serve those interests. We not only avow that phys-

ical conditions have shaped our speculations about God and heaven, but we record our wonder also at the religious persistency which insists that the physical forces of every age be made to render their tribute to the spiritual.

We must not lose sight of the power of a Christian ideal to take its place among the actual working forces of the world's life. We must not think of Christian views as mere creations of the time. They are in their day creators of their time and of the times to come after them. Physical and economic laws must have worked together, of course, before there came to be the marvelous cathedrals which are the delight of every artist. There must have been developed the tools which could shape the stone and the skill which could pile block on block. There must have been collected the money to pay the workmen. Moreover, the lines of the cathedrals must have been drawn to meet the necessities fixed in the nature of things, but all these forces together do not explain the cathedral. Not even the genius of the artist explains fully. We must make some provision for the mystic religious impulse

which demanded that it should thus find appropriate expression in the lasting foundations and soaring arches.

To drop down to a plane so much lower that it may seem that we have taken the flight from the sublime to the ridiculous, let us think of some of the requirements of the Roman Catholic Church as to the food which the faithful shall eat. Fish must be the reliance on Fridays and through some stated seasons, let us say. Now, we admit that it is of great importance to the fishermen and to the fish dealers to have the requirement as to fish stay in force, but we can hardly believe that the requirement as to fish-eating rests in any large degree upon the demands of the fish market. A religious ideal is present, and that ideal is one of the forces driving the fleets of the fishermen to the Banks of Newfoundland and holding them there through fog and storm. No, the religious spirit is not a mere passive reflection of material necessities, no matter how important these necessities may be. Too many wars have raged in which the religious motive has been decisive for us to believe that religious ideas

are not active agents in the historical life of mankind.

We are drifting a little to one side, however. What we started to say was that the mind of man to-day seeks to curb and control the physical factors because of the importance of these factors for the higher life of man. Some massive necessities we cannot overcome. Let us adjust ourselves to these as best we may. There are improvements which we can make even in the earth itself. Let us make the improvement. The earth is not an end in itself, but an instrument for righteousness. The material forces which aid righteousness can be improved by the help of mind. Physical conditions are indeed mighty, but the Christian ideals themselves are mightier still, especially in their demands upon the material forces for help. The idea of God and of man is not a mere reflection, though the physical basis must be right before we can have the right idea. The conception of God, therefore, moves forth to make the conditions right. The highest conceptions must have the right of way. If the present environ-

ment will not allow us to think the highest concerning God the environment must be worked over. Economic laws indeed mold politics and social ideals and artistic creations, but in the name of God and man Christianity emphasizes the sway of higher law which shall make the industrial law and all laws subservient to the noblest ends. The Christian ideal is even attacking the geographical problem with insistence upon the need of tying the ends of the earth closer together that commercial contacts may make for spiritual contacts. The whole world must be purified for the sake of that better understanding of God and of ourselves which will come out of the cleaner life.

We trust that we make ourselves clear. In an essay like this we must not minimize the force of the great outside powers in shaping the doctrines of Christianity. It requires only a superficial reading of history to see that the longest advances for theology have many times taken their start outside the theological realm. The religious consciousness assumes that in responding to the play of such outside forces it is not yielding itself to be made sport of by

the underlying powers. Even where these powers seem to be the working of blind massive necessities we are to look upon them as instruments in the control of the fundamental spiritual purpose. The recognition of the significance of these forces is not the abject surrender of religion, but the regal glory of religion, since religion dares to attack the universe and make it better in the name of larger life, dares attempt even the regeneration of heathenism for the sake of bringing about the better understanding of God. The more completely we recognize the vastness of the material necessities which mold nations, the importance of the economic and political forces, the pressure of the Zeitgeist, and so on and on through a long list, the more we have to wonder at the regality of that daring which can look these things in the face and then move forth to transform them. The formulation of the Copernican system is not the victory of matter, but the victory of the discovering and announcing mind. The significance of the system for Christianity is immeasurably vast, but the glory of Christianity immediately appears

in the power that forthwith picks up the astronomical distances as new yardsticks to measure in part the long reaches of the might of God. Any alteration of the world makes for the alteration of Christianity. The greater the improvement in the world, the more surely does the Christian claim the altered system for the glory of God and men as that glory is taught by Christ. Christianity recognizes the significance of the outside forces for herself, and seeks to lay hands on them for her sake and for their own sake.

VIII

THE CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

Of more importance, however, than the outside forces in shaping belief has been the actual experience of those who through the ages have constituted the real Church—the body of spiritually minded worshipers. The outside forces have been like the atmosphere surrounding a body; the Church has been the body itself. While there may not be enough in the figure of the Church as an organism to warrant an elaborate use of biological terms, there is enough to help us to see that the Church's acquisition of truth is a distinctly vital process. The Church does not reason her way to convictions by exclusive reliance upon the logical and speculative faculty. She finds that she must have certain intellectual territories in order to exist and forthwith moves into possession. This is to say, she makes assumptions which seem necessary to the satisfaction

of the religious needs. Having made the assumptions, she acts on the principle that the possession of the beliefs is at least nine points of the law and holds the beliefs until sufficient reason for doubt appears. If belief cannot be brought into harmony with the demands of the logical nature, or if there is manifest conflict with facts, the Church must surrender or readjust her doctrines, but she throws the burden of proof on the attacking party. She is not a merely logical or metaphysical instrument, but an organism. Her beliefs are the expressions of her life, and are in turn expected to justify themselves in life. By their fruits even the doctrines are to be known. The Church's function in relation to religious certainty is not to pronounce in an artificially dogmatic way upon beliefs, but to show that the belief springs out of life and that it in turn fosters life. She does not produce certainty by declaring that this or that is true, but by nourishing the kind of life which will beget faith. In her great pronouncements her underlying aim has been a life-aim no matter how little she may have understood the real

situation herself. The formal logical reasons given, the appeals to history and to divine authority, cannot conceal from us the fact that the decisive certainty has been begotten and not made. The certainty has come from deeper springs than the leaders of a particular time may themselves have imagined. In the seizure of new territories by a nation there may be much citing of precedents and much marshaling of argument, but the determining historic fact is most often the pressure of the expanding life of the nation. If the particular reasons are overthrown other reasons will be found so long as the nation feels the stirrings to larger life, but if the inner pressure dies down no reasons will be found cogent. So with the Church. We do not accuse the spokesmen of the Church of any insincerity when we say that the formal reasons uttered for a belief may not be real at all. The real reasons may lie so deep that the spokesman himself does not suspect them. The Church arrives at beliefs by a process of assumption. She holds the beliefs as long as they satisfy. Her compelling aim is to satisfy

the demands of her total life. If a belief satisfies she will hold to the belief as true until something more satisfying appears, and then she will surrender the old belief not as false but as less truthful than the newer view. As an organism the function of the Church is to take what she requires for the demands of her life. This living seizure of beliefs as true is a great scandal to the merely technical logicians, but then everything living is a scandal to them. Such logicians would have the Church believe nothing except what is capable of demonstration by the syllogism, but the Church appeals to life as against the logicians and passes on.

If we wish historic instances of the exercise of this vitality by the Church we may think first of the movement which ended by giving us the canon of the New Testament. As we read through the story of early Church life we are struck by the fact that the real mark by which the New Testament writings gained a place in the canon was their power to satisfy the demands of the spiritual life. Of course, there was appeal to tradition and citation of

authorities by the fathers, but, after all, the decisive evidence was the ability of these writings to minister to spiritual need. Books read week after week in the assemblies fostered a life which was itself a sure discerner as to what was holy Scripture and what was not. When we think of the lack of technical historical investigating tools in the day of the fathers we may well be thankful that a life instinct kept out of the Book apocryphal gospels which put forth claim to authenticity and pseudo-epistles which could furnish quite a plausible showing for apostolic authorship. The Church took what she thought she needed and threw the rest away. The more detailed historic investigation of later times has failed to reveal that she made any substantial mistake.

We can see the same life interests at work in the process of creed-making. The great creedal statements of the Church and of the Churches have come out of life. They have not been manufactured in wooden, carpenter-like fashion. The phrases which may seem very lifeless to us now were once quick with the pulse of discussions of pulpit and market place

and street. George Eliot is not untrue to history when she makes the *filioque* clause part of a street discussion in Romola. If we come at all close to the debates of the Councils we find that the great organic necessities of the Church were the driving factors back of the most abstruse and abstract arguments. In dealing with the earlier statements of the doctrine of the Church we are very often apt to speak of these statements as fossils. Let us not make the mistake of estimating the power of the doctrine in its day by what we are pleased to call the fossil in our day. Let us remember that the hard, bony, logical structure has survived but that the muscle and blood and nerve have departed. The hardness of the early statements of Calvinism may distress us of to-day. We should not forget the power of that Calvinism when it was alive. It came out of the life and ministered to life. The boniness of the logic as we see it to-day ought not to dull our imagination to the solemn beauty and mastodonic force of the system when it was alive. So with every other creedal statement which has played any sub-

stantial force in the life of the Church—it was an expression of the life-needs of the time and ministered to the life-needs of the time. When such statements ceased to have force it was not because they were overthrown by technical argument. They perished as the mastodons of another geological era perished—the climate changed. We may be evolutionists enough to believe, moreover, that the Church was keeping so close to the truth of reality in this vital expression of her needs that there has been no creed of any historical significance but that in dying bequeathed some organ or some function for the organism which was to come after.

This insight into the method by which the Church has advanced in seizing and stating truth for herself will explain why it is that she has often been apparently so indifferent to logical onslaughts upon her creedal statements. She has framed the statements not merely as logical utterances, though she has had in mind the satisfaction of a logical need. The utterances have been in a sense symbolic. They have been the language of life, language which has this for one of its charms, that it

means more than it says. The beliefs have stood for phases of an underlying life, and sometimes the outward and formal contradiction have been only the signs of the variety and complexity of the life-factors at work. Just as unity and complexity, though formally contradictory, are experienced without a sense of strain or contradiction in the personal life itself, so many creedal statements have been academically contradictory without really bringing the inner religious consciousness any sense of stress. Some phrasings of the belief in the Trinity and the Incarnation and the Atonement are to-day seen to be so self-contradictory that we wonder that men ever could have held them. It may help us to an understanding of the mind of another day as well as to a better statement for our own day to remember that the language was the expression of a spiritual organism trying to utter a marvelously full sense of life through language which broke down in the attempt. If we do not seem irreverent we may say that many creedal statements are more the ejaculations of a vast life

than the ordered utterances of a school. The mind is not only expressing itself but is holding before itself symbols of a reality which it knows to surpass the content of phrases, and is ever reaching for larger symbols.

Something of this vital practical interest has appeared also when the Church has persisted in keeping to its beliefs in face of the attempts at revolutionary innovation. The superficial critic becomes very severe when the Church will not make an immediate surrender at some point where he has marshaled his conclusions invincibly. We shall qualify what we are now to say by a remark in a later section, but when we see how many trivial objections have been brought forward in the name of logic we may be thankful for the instinct which has kept the Church voicing her beliefs even when she has seemed to lack a leader capable of answering the logic. The one way to overcome the merely speculative intellect is to ignore it. We may call this proneness to ignore technical speculation the inertia of the Church if we will, but we need not be disturbed if our enemies even call it just ordinary every-

day dullness. The dullness arises out of the fact that the Church, when she is performing her proper function, is dealing with the issues of life and is not responsive to the ingenuity and the smartness which mark the language of the logical fencers and jugglers.

For still further historic instance of the method of the Church in the utterance of doctrine we may think of how the Church has come to some conclusions concerning herself. Some beliefs have come out of practical necessities. Understand, now, we are not so much trying to justify these beliefs as to explain them. Take the Roman Catholic claim to ecclesiastical primacy and papal infallibility. This doctrine has advanced through its successive developments by the pressure of life necessities in the Roman Church. The historic fact was, no doubt, that the position of Rome in the early Christian centuries made inevitable certain practical problems and pointed the way to their solution. The Church at Rome took the primacy and found reasons afterward. The fundamental reason why attacks on the historicity of Peter's relation

to the Church at Rome have so little weight is because the primacy of that Church did not rest on Peter. Peter was an afterthought. We do not charge the Church with insincerity. The fact was that in the progress of events it became necessary for the Church to take the leadership. For the leaders to conclude that the inevitable leadership was ordained of God was itself inevitable, and the further discovery of confirmation in the Scripture was almost as inevitable. In the doctrine of papal infallibility to-day the logic of the situation is not so decisive as the psychology of the situation. The psychology of the situation is just this, that multitudes of men—many of them very intelligent men—desire to have things settled for them. Without bothering themselves with the validity of the arguments for papal infallibility they are quite willing to treat the Pope practically as a court of last resort or final appeal. Those who do not feel the pressure of this necessity may not have stopped to consider that it is often practically very important to get a case closed, and that of two evils, keeping a case open and closing it in a wrong way,

closing it in the wrong way very often works the less practical harm.

Before we become too impatient over the illogical character of such procedure it may be well for us to remind ourselves that other branches of society besides the Church move in the same course. Suppose one should imagine that the decisive factor in Webster's reply to Hayne was Webster's superior logic! He would miss altogether the historic truth. That truth is that from the days of the adoption of the Constitution on through the succeeding decades the North and the South had been growing apart. The North had developed a type of life which made a broader idea of nationality necessary, and the South had remained nearer the condition of life which had been best supported by the doctrine of state sovereignty. Each orator was the exponent of a type of life. The war was between the two types of life. The views which states take of themselves, as these views are reflected in their constitutions, come out of life. They have to be flexible, at least in interpretation, because life is flexible.

In the great historic movements, then, the Church has seized whatever truth its growing life has craved, and has held this truth so long as the truth has justified itself in life. If we assume that the truth is the correspondence of our conception with the conception of the Mind which constitutes reality we have to say that the Church has moved on the principle that she has increasingly approximated to the thought of the Infinite Mind as she has thrown herself on the best assumptions in the confidence that these would not lead her astray.

We now come to look for a moment at the function of the Church, or a church, for that matter, in begetting religious certainty in the mind of the individual. We must keep before us that the Church is but one factor of many working together to produce certainty in the mind of the individual. Still, it is possible for us to isolate this factor at least partially. When we thus look at the Church alone it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Church does her work best when instead of pronouncing arbitrarily and authoritatively she sets

herself to beget the kind of life on which religious conviction depends. She has a chance to throw around the child from birth the religious influence. If any protest against this she can reply that she has as much right to prejudice the child in favor of religion as a nation has to strive to fill the earliest thoughts of the child life with a spirit of patriotism. She has in her power a large furnishing of those forces which lie outside the merely intellectual which are effective for evoking the religious spirit—the coöperation of art, of social relationships, the emphasis on historic continuity, the appeal to the imagination through attempt at world-wide conquest. Even that crowd contagion which some psychologists think to be so evil in the effect of religious appeals has its legitimate uses. Crowd contagion, of course, may be evil, but crowd contagion must be judged as any other contagion is judged. It is bad to "catch" disease, but not bad to "catch" good health. All depends on what is caught.

The Church can recognize even more clearly than she has yet done the dependence of belief

on the right attitude of will and the deepening of certainty which follows the right life. She ought, in short, to look upon herself as a laboratory for practice in righteousness, for out of righteousness comes that abiding and increasing certainty of the presence of God which nothing can shake. More important than the work which the Church actually accomplishes is the reaction of the work upon her workers. The Church need not busy herself with formal arguments as to the existence of God if she can get men to assume the existence of God and live as if he were real. She can get along with fewer arguments about the divineness of Christianity if she can prevail upon men to assume that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and to walk therein. She can largely dismiss the formal arguments about immortality if she can persuade men to begin to live as if they were to live forever. Out of such practical assumptions come the abiding convictions. Moreover, with the right emphasis on the common-to-all as a test of belief she can keep beliefs from running off into aberration and triviality.

We say "with the correct emphasis upon the common-to-all" advisedly, but we must now say that the faults of the Church as an agent in begetting religious certainty have largely come from a failure to recognize the importance of the individual. The problem before the Church here is substantially similar to the problem before democracy—the problem of allowing right scope to the individual. The Church has for its glory the production of towering individuals just as democracy has the production of towering individuals for its glory. The Church, like democracy, however, has sometimes shown an inability to appreciate the specialized efforts of the individuals who have arisen in her own centers, and has often been unwilling to allow them sufficient room. There are some services which the individual has to render for the Church which the Church as a mass cannot well render herself. There are some regions of spiritual exploration about which the Church can become aware only as the exceptional individual acts as pioneer.

We have said that in all her seizures of

belief the Church must aim at the satisfaction of the total life of mankind. She sometimes errs through indifference to facts. As hinted at in an above paragraph, she sometimes reads history and passes upon it to suit herself, as the Roman Catholic Church has more than once done to support her claims. When some exact student points out the discrepancies she is sometimes slow to acknowledge the correction, and to put her claims upon a better foundation. She sometimes ignores facts and turns fiercely upon the scholar who dares speak out in the name of scientific accuracy. Of course, the Church is justified in putting some facts to one side as not yet understood, as for example, the dark features of the physical system which make against the doctrine of the goodness of God. We may put these cruel aspects to one side as not yet understood, but it would be folly to ignore or deny them. There are some facts, however, which the Church must face, and she must listen to the individual leaders as they teach her how to face them. A Roman Catholic recently defended his Church for condemning Galileo by

the plea that the Church did not deny Galileo's discoveries as scientific achievements, but that she denied the theological consequences tied up with the departure from the older astronomy. With the best intentions she was forced to deny the astronomy for fear that an acceptance of the astronomy would be misunderstood. In straits like those of the days of Galileo a wise pilot is the only salvation--if the Church will follow him. A pilot, however, is an individual.

Again, the Church must find room for the individual thinker who attempts to find more and more logical expression for the belief of the Church. We have said some hard things about the logician. Let us say now that we have had in mind the type of thinker who imagines that strict logical procedure is everything. We urge that in her endeavors to satisfy the religious demands of men by her seizures of thought-positions the Church must make provision for the satisfaction of logical needs, for while the logician is not a discoverer he can do much to put in order what has been discovered. The Church has long since seized

the main highways of the truth, the highways which lead to the kingdom, but the logician can straighten the curves and reduce the grades. He may even upon occasion put up a sign of "No thoroughfare" to the right hand or to the left. Civilization's pathways across the continents were not discovered by the scientific surveyors. The hunters and traders had found the trails and the passes before the surveyors arrived; the savages had trudged the same paths before the traders appeared; and the wild beasts had worn them smooth before the savages came. Civilization, however, needed the fine skill of the surveyor in leveling and straightening the way for the later comers. Mankind has from the beginning been traveling along the line of well-known instincts and aspirations and assumptions. The trained thinker can give immense service in straightening and broadening the Church's right of way. For the Church to draw a sword on such a servant, unless he is clearly trying to land her in a bog, is verily a strange procedure. Even if the guide is headed for the bog it is not necessary to draw

the sword on him. All the Church has to do is to decline to follow. If a surveyor makes a mistake now and then it is better to correct the mistake by encouraging a re-reading of the instrument than to smash the instrument and to banish the surveyor.

Once again, there are high spiritual attainments to which the individual saint has to show the approach. There are some men with a gift for religious insight which amounts to positive genius. Out of their saintliness the Church may make its longest strides forward. Out of their fine awareness of the divine comes a general deepening of the sense of the divine throughout the Church. We are to look upon the Church as the Body of Christ and to allow our minds to play around the suggestiveness of the figure. We think of the Christ as in actual touch with the world through the lives of his followers. We see the significance of the deeds of the disciples for the larger revelations which come from Christ. In the light of the figure we think of the significance of the healthy, normal processes for spiritual revelation; for the soul cannot transmit a perfect

revelation through an imperfect body. Even the most matter-of-fact practical activities of the Church have significance for the beliefs of the Church. The modern psychologist emphasizes the importance even of the hand for the unfolding of the perceptive powers of the mind. The reach and grasp of the hand correct and enlarge the effectiveness of the eye. The modern educator informs us that manual training has meaning for intellectual development—enforcing as it does the mutual adjustment of theoretical and practical. So those more material agencies which may be called the working hands of that Church which is the Body of Christ are educative forces for the formulation and correction of doctrine.

Above all, we think of the individual saints as the glory of the Body, if we may so speak, the delicate spiritual tissues which seize the finer impressions of the Spirit and make them living impulses for all the members. The Church learns as a body lives, through finding itself in possession of appetites by which it is moved forward to seize what it craves. The process is vital throughout. The development

lies along the line of improvement of the fineness of the fiber as well as through increase of its size. The fineness can come only as the Church searches out and holds fast the individual who shows any promise of leadership.

We do not consider it necessary to say more about the value of the leadership of the individual for the Church. The value is obvious. The individuals are the feelers who to-day reach ahead for the truth which to-morrow will be wrought into the organism of the body of believers. That the prophets of one generation are stoned by their contemporaries comes out of the tenacity with which the slower-moving mass holds fast to the teachings of the prophets of the preceding generation. The persecution of the prophet of to-day is really a sign of the effectiveness with which the prophets of yesterday proclaimed their message. The prophets who to-day are persecuted will be likewise the authorities of to-morrow. This is not much consolation to the persecuted, perhaps, but it is the teaching of historical fact, nevertheless. The individual reaches on ahead and takes the risks of the advance. The Church would never

arrive if the advance truth-feelers did not perform this function.

We wish to add, however, before we leave this section that the power of the individuals does not come largely from formal and abstract statements. The influence which makes for conviction is nowhere shown to be more thoroughly extra-intellectual than in the relation of the effective teachers to their disciples. Of course, now and then the bare formulation of a truth in strictly intellectual terms has weight, but this is not apt to be so in the realms which we are considering. Formal statements may suffice for mathematical sciences, but they are not enough elsewhere. The abstract idea may have been stated in formula after formula, but it does not become really cogent until it is forged into expression by some man whose force is more than purely intellectual. There must be the touch of fire which can warm the heart and touch the imagination. There must be that sense for efficient form which can shape the statement into power as the arrow-maker shapes a stick into the fast missile or the lens-

maker shapes cold glass into a fire-starter or a telescope, or the shipbuilder draws the oak or steel along the lines which make for the swift cleaving of the waves.

When we study the control of the genius over his pupils we are convinced that the control even of logicians is largely personal. Not only the logical system as such is effective, but much more effective is the personal warmth which the interpreter communicates to the disciples as he comes face to face with them. We hear the founders of thought-schools spoken of as inspirational. The real founders have indeed been inspirational. Tone and gesture and smile and manifestation of personal interest in the welfare of particular students—all these have been dynamic. We hear too much about impersonal forces as shaping the mind, as if these acted entirely by themselves. History is more than "geo-political" or economic. It is the interplay of persons, and the distinctive marks of personal charm in a teacher must not be left out of account as fashioners of beliefs.

Above all, in Christian education the con-

vincing energy is incarnation. If the man's belief is noticeably above the man the belief fails in carrying power. If an important belief is projected forward from an important life the belief may be incalculably powerful. Incarnation, however, is really making a word into flesh, to be seen and handled. The life is the teacher rather than any formal articulations which fall from the lips. The life will make good the shortcomings in the doctrine, and without the life the most consistent doctrine is of limited avail.

IX

THE BIBLE AND RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

It requires no very extensive argument to show that the idea of the Bible as a literally and mechanically infallible religious authority lacks compelling force to-day. On the other hand, it would not be hard to show that the doctrine of scriptural infallibility came originally out of the life-needs of religious thinking and that the doctrine served a religious purpose. For an earlier day the doctrine was an approximation to the truth and a step ahead. The only recourse by which the Scriptures could be preserved in a former time was to invest them with a sacredness which touched every letter. If it be objected that this was a step backward from the better understanding of the first Christian days, that the writers of the Scriptures themselves had no intention of claiming verbal infallibility for their letters and speeches and songs, we have to reply that

many historical steps forward seem at the first a step back. The first and immediate effect of heaping fuel on the fire may be to check the blaze. The acquisition of many thousands of believers for Christianity—believers who came practically all at once—made a task different from that presented by the conversion of a few here and there in the earliest days of the Church. In the latter case the members who had personally known Paul could furnish sufficient commentary on his epistles for the new converts without help from any doctrine of literal infallibility. The convert could be given a degree of personal attention which would make superfluous an external authority. When, however, the converts came in hosts, and came too without any marked inner experience, a new problem arose. The Scriptures were invested with a different sacredness, not by arbitrary decree of Church leaders, but by the unconscious demands of the people themselves. Men in masses could not make the distinctions necessary for the use of such a doctrine of biblical authority as we could profit by to-day. When the Protestant Reformation

broke from the doctrine of an infallible Church the demand for an external authority of another sort was all the more pronounced, and came out of the religious needs of the masses of the new Churches themselves. We repeat that we falsify history if we think of the doctrine of literal biblical infallibility as a cunningly devised instrument of religious leaders. The doctrine arose from the needs of the people themselves. The Bible was looked upon as literally infallible because the believers could not then live religiously upon any other view. They had to have such a view, and they seized it. We cannot explain the spread of a doctrine like that of biblical infallibility by calling it an artificial creation. The doctrine met a clamorous life-need of a former day.

It will now, no doubt, seem to some that we have refuted our own argument. We have shown that the demand for the doctrine of literal biblical infallibility came of the religious needs of the Churches, and yet we have already indicated our own view that the dogma of literal infallibility is not suited to our day.

Is not this an admission that the demand of the Church is no indication of the truth of a belief which she has seized? In reply we avow that we have not held that a belief which the Church holds at any one time is of necessity absolutely and finally true. We do think of these seizures as in the main on the path to reality. We believe that we have to judge beliefs by their total inner and outer results. Truth does not consist in bare statement without regard to the character of the mind addressed. Statements of belief have to be judged by the impression they make. We can commit grievous mistake by thinking that we have discharged our whole duty to the truth by giving utterance to statements which satisfy merely ourselves. Truth is not revealed until it is understood. Truth is uttered not for the sake of articulating the air, but for the sake of quickening the mind to whom the words are addressed. A thinker may be so scrupulous in expressing his view as to be altogether false in the impression he makes. Judging the doctrine of biblical infallibility not by its formal statements—which, by the

way, the holders themselves seldom pronounced satisfactory—but by its effect in its time, we have to say that in all probability the doctrine wrought an indispensable part in keeping alive faith in the Scriptures. We do not see how any other belief could have served the purpose. In that transitional period when the masses of the people began to have the questionings which mark the growth of intelligence the view began to be productive of harm, but even here it is possible to exaggerate the ill effects. We cannot in these days commend the view which would make the Bible an authority in such a sense that opening it at random would throw light on any and all problems. Still, the practical dangers of such a course are not so dreadful as we might think. Occasional damage would result from such unintelligent use of the Book, some foolish and ridiculous incidents might occur, but, on the whole, better have a man opening the Bible from a doctrine like this than not to have him opening it at all. The good in the Bible would have a chance even under such a theory, and this was the real aim of the doctrine of literal

infallibility—to give the Bible a chance. Before we indulge in too severe criticism of the Church leadership which could tolerate and support the belief in the mechanical inerrancy of the Scripture we would better reflect on the historic truth that, all things considered, this doctrine in its time played a large part in saving the Scriptures.

Emphasis on miracle as chief support of the authority of the Scriptures flourished more widely in that earlier day which in its philosophical constructions put God at a distance. Before our modern idea of the divine immanence became popular the signs of the presence of God most sought for were in the nature of miraculous interventions. Considering the state of thought in an earlier time, the reliance on miracle for the authority of the Scriptures was inevitable. In a deistic age the stress on the miraculous, no doubt, was beneficial for the preservation of the Scriptures.

To-day the philosophic outlook is altered. We do not imagine God to be so completely above or outside of the world that he must set aside natural processes to reach us. Instead

of attempting to show how God can act by a natural method, many feel that the burden of proof is upon those who would have him act by any but a natural method. Those of us who in spite of the spirit of a time somewhat hostile toward miracles still keep place for them hold fast to miracles not as objective proofs but rather as fitting accompaniments of the spiritual events which they attend. The belief in miracle thus rests on inner supports, and the opposition to miracle is an expression of a scientific temper. It would hardly be possible to convince anyone to-day of occurrence of miracle in scriptural times if such a one were not already open to the probability of miracle. Present-day acceptance of miracle grows out of unwillingness to surrender some spiritual values which are closely interwoven with the miraculous in the narrative. Both in belief and disbelief the inner attitude is decisive.

The attitude of the large body of Christians toward miracles is determined not by their evidential or logical value, but by their spiritual suggestiveness and symbolism. Here we have an explanation both of the willingness

and the unwillingness to make concession. The Church in general seems willing to admit that some stories of miracles may be legendary, that others may be poetic forms of utterance, that others are narratives in which the presence of God is emphasized to the neglect of the processes by which the will of God was wrought out, that others suggest the control of a lower law by a higher law, and so on almost indefinitely. Why, then, having yielded so much, will the Church not yield all and allow the miraculous in the Scriptures to be dropped out?

As a matter of fact, even the most radical critic would likely object to casting out the stories of miracle from the Scriptures. He would explain the stories in one way or another and then keep them for their suggestiveness. The main mass of the believers, while possibly indifferent as to the fate of this or that particular miracle, find so much of spiritual quickening even in many occurrences that cannot be explained as other than miraculous that they will not consent to the loss of lifeblood involved in too extensive a biblical surgical

operation. For example, the Church to-day might feel no great reluctance to an elimination of the extraordinary from this or that particular miracle of Christ, but she would not consent to such treatment of Christ himself as would take him from his place as the supreme miracle of the Scriptures. Christ as the incarnate life of God is the real object of defense by the believers. If for spiritual purposes this life seems to call for miracle in the world of persons and things the miracle will be held fast as long as it serves the spiritual purpose—that is to say, as long as it ministers to the total life of the believers.

By this time it may be that some one will again urge a demand considered somewhat in earlier pages, the demand that in scriptural matters the critic of to-day is final authority —that we may believe the Scriptures just so far as the critic allows us to believe them; that the methods of historical criticism have so advanced in the past few decades that we have in them an instrument for finding the meaning and worth of the scriptural narrative such as the world has never before seen.

Before we concede all of this we insist again upon the presence of the inner factor in shaping the methods of the newer criticism. We might mention many schools of biblical criticism. Of recent years the principles of evolutionism have been a deciding factor in determining what was to be found in the narratives. We have to know, however, how much authority evolutionism itself has before we can well tell how much weight to give some pronouncements of the evolutionist critics. The passionate desire for orderly progress in the revelation of the truth of God is good, but our ideas of what order may be ought not to be allowed too much influence in saying that such and such ideas could not have appeared until after such and such other ideas. We are dealing with a complicated problem when we are dealing with a revelation from God to men. We cannot always be sure what the divine plan would call for at a particular crisis. Or we are apt to forget how the indifferent and disobedient wills of men can thwart a revealing movement. Moreover, the data are far from ample and the history is away in the past. For

these and many other reasons we should be critical of pronouncements which leap very far down into details. The distribution of two or three clauses in one sentence of the present record among authors of two or three different centuries is always rather a dubious procedure, and cannot be taken very seriously except by those whose passion for theory is rapidly cutting them off from actual life processes outside the study.

A healthy sense of reality, however, ought to correct the overemphasis on the purely scholastic interests among the students and make the general contributions of recent scholarship among the most valuable which the Church has received. On the whole, the scholars have acted out of an impulse to make the Scriptures more life-giving than before. The last few decades have seen a veritable redemption of some parts of the Scriptures akin to the redemption of arid lands. Just as the stimulus of increasing physical hunger has sent the scientists out to the waterless plains to devise some means of grain-producing irrigation, so the stimulus of increasing spiritual hunger has

sent the scientific student of the Scriptures to hitherto unappropriated portions of the Book to see if some vital use could not be made of them. Thus through hitherto comparatively barren stretches of law and chronicle and prophecy a broad and fertilizing stream of historical understanding has been run, with the result that the Book is more life-giving to-day than ever before. Naturally in a process like this some wild work will be done, just as many a harebrained plan is devised for the reclamation of a desert; but on the whole the result has made for larger spiritual food supply. The students have sought life and they have found life.

The first mark of the newer understanding is just this, that the Book is shown to be more than ever a book of real life. It comes out of life and its teachings work back into life. Take the stories of the patriarchs in the early chapters of Genesis. These are not less divine when they are revealed as the outcome of a people's religious consciousness than when looked upon as a dictated report of long-past events sent down by the unmediated influence

of the Divine Spirit. If the stories were told around the fires of shepherds and herdsmen and were thus passed on from father to son we can see very well how they have been made so vital in their lifelikeness and so laden with moral suggestiveness. Only the vital features could survive a process like this. Everything else would be dropped out. Or think what an advance has come with our understanding that the laws of the Hebrews were not imposed by fiat and all at once but were real expressions of the deepening insight of the people. So with the other factors in the biblical literature. The songs which we have in the Psalter mean more if they were national music, in wide circulation, than if they were the productions of a few geniuses no matter how highly inspired. The prophecies are more significant coming out of the pressure of national necessities than if they were chiefly miraculous predictions of far-distant events. The gospels mean more as recollections set down for a practical use than as the systematically prepared work of scholars. The epistles were written to meet needs begotten of the life of a particular time.

They would not have meant anything for the people of their day, and very little for any succeeding day, if they had not been written thus. Even the partition of documents among different authors, if the process does not run to rank absurdity, is of significance as showing how vitally interested men were in the religious literature. The documents came out of life and they bore upon life. They were meant to be practical guides. History, law, song, gospels, epistles—all had immediate reference to practical needs and aimed to help in actual crises of life. They were not only products of life but also producers of life.

It is from the point of view which regards them as producers of life that we must approach the Scriptures as a religious authority for us of to-day. We see the Scriptures as the revelation of life. We shall speak of the authority of Christ later on, but we may say here that the Scriptures, taking them throughout their entire range as showing the kind of life which culminated in the Christ and the kind of life which followed the Christ, are to be regarded as normative and standard in that

they give us the life as it sets toward Christ and culminates in him and follows after him. The authority is the authority of life itself. The force of the Scriptures is so distinctly vital that it catches us in its momentum and carries us along. When we seek for a better understanding of the Scriptures as to their authority we really have in mind the closer contact with the life there. The biblical student performs an invaluable service in helping the Church to see more and more clearly just what the life was, or rather is; for the characteristic of the Book is that above all other books it is throbbing with life. We do not use the Book most wisely by drawing certain ideas from it and by looking upon these ideas as authoritative. We do much better by allowing ourselves to be caught in the current of life in the Book and by yielding ourselves to be borne on with that current. Biblical theology must be studied, indeed, but biblical theology is not authoritative in the same sense that the Bible is authoritative. The Bible is filled with the life. We have to abstract from this life to consider the various problems of theology and

ethics and worship raised by the Scriptures, but every step in abstraction is a step away from the full and whole life which we find in the Scriptures. The abstraction is indeed valuable as helping us to a better understanding of the life, but the life is the standard to which we must ever return.

The authority of the Scriptures is first the authority of a kind of life which we see set before us very clearly in the pages of the Book. The authority does not rest here or there upon isolated passages, but abides in the impression and impulse which the revealing movement makes upon our lives. The Book is to rule us not so much by giving us ideas to which we must subscribe or codes which we must follow as by giving us a life which takes its own course with us. The river of the water of life described in the last chapter of the book of Revelation is a fit symbol of the real power of the Scriptures. The Bible closes with this picture of the river proceeding forth from God and his throne. The truth rushes forth from the Scriptures with a marvelously vital energy to carry men along with it. The

authority is not the authority of a fixed standard, but the authority of a vital stream which sweeps on irresistibly and inevitably.

Coming to still closer quarters with the problem before us, we may say that the life which is in the Scriptures and comes forth from the Scriptures manifests itself by developing a power of seizure in the name of life itself. The very peculiarity of the chosen people of Israel is the remarkable seriousness with which they took their religious consciousness. Even their material conquests are illustration of the propensity to seize in the name of spiritual eminent domain which is developed by extraordinary religious fervor. The extermination of the Canaanites may not have been historically so bloody as we might imagine, but the attitude toward the Canaanites was an early indication of this power of the religious consciousness to insist on its own right to make material place for itself on the earth.

We may find further illustration of the development of the power to seize in the name of religious consciousness in the work of the

more spiritual of the prophets. The prophet was first of all a man of his own time, speaking out of the needs of his time. Hardly any spiritual daring in history can compare with the boldness which could put into the current politics of Israel the significance which the prophets saw there. The prophets dared to announce that the mighty power of Assyria, for example, was simply a rod in the hands of Jahveh. Imagine the amused contempt which such a conception would have aroused in the mind of an Assyrian if he had stopped long enough to think about it. The mighty bulk of Assyria a mere instrument for bringing good to a people of a despised outlying province! So with the attitude of the prophets toward Babylon and Persia. Cyrus had been girded by Israel's God without himself suspecting the fact. This boldness did not come out of any sense of material prosperity. The prophets were not filled with the wine of the excitement of victory. The greatest claims were made at the moments when the outlook for Israel was darkest. Israel must live as a spiritual force, and the prophet simply seized the assumptions

which he thought necessary. He saw a world-wide meaning in the value of a nation which to all outward appearance was itself insignificant, and he claimed the future for that nation's religion. The time would come when the Lord's house would be established in the top of the mountains and all nations would flow into it by a kind of reversal of the laws of historical gravitation. The prophets dared believe what their spiritual impulses called for. We see very clearly that while the form of their prophecy was temporal and fleeting the substance, nevertheless, laid hold on high spiritual truth.

In this connection we may point out that modern study has helped us to recognize something of the daring of the prophetic schools in their dealing with Israel's past. We to-day see the narratives of Israel as documents in which history was written largely from the prophetic standpoint. The writers were not aiming at literal matter-of-fact exactness. Their very freedom in dealing with the traditions which had come down to them is an indication of the spiritual boldness of which we

speak. They read God into their narratives with marvelous determination. Looking back after the lapse of all these centuries, we have to say that they were right. They gave us narratives which we see as more and more true at the same time that we become in some details more uncertain of them as records of absolutely literal matters of fact. A government report as to a fact is authority of one kind. The poetical or oratorical or inspirational treatment of fact is an authority of another kind—and of a higher kind.

We repeat that the life which issues forth from the Scriptures develops certainty. We do not care to overelaborate our contention, but we may say further that this certainty which is developed throughout the Scriptures comes, in general, to its highest manifestation in the impetus which is revealed throughout the Book to higher and higher appropriations in the thought of God. Anthropomorphism is in any case a kind of tribute to the daring of the human mind—to the boldness which dares think of the divine in terms of the human. The Scriptures are altogether inspiring in the

extent to which they demand the best of God. If any new moral insight came to a prophet the insight was looked upon forthwith as a revelation of the character of Jahveh; and of course a new morality in the character of Jahveh led to a fresh dynamic for the moral life of the worshipers. The idea of God given in the Scriptures is fixed only in direction. Every deepening of the moral life leads to a better understanding of God, and the movement is on and up. The idea of God expanded till the whole earth was looked upon as his footstool and the highest lives were regarded as gleams of the life of Jahveh. This, in a word, is the authority of the Scriptures, speaking now in the most general terms—the Scriptures set the life toward thinking of God in the highest and holiest terms. They compel us to believe that everything high and worthy is to be found in God, that any unfolding of the human excellence is a revelation of the life of God. They impel us to claim the very best for God.

Still, some one may say, this is but a method, after all, this seizing of conceptions and at-

tributing them to God. How do we know, after all, that we have the truth? The answer is just the answer to which we are led by taking the Scriptures into our lives. The life bears witness of the truth. We look upon truth as that which satisfies the entire life. If the life is satisfied the highest test for truth of which we know is met. The Scriptures deepen the life. They make the life ask for more, and they help the life to realize that this deepening appetite itself is a finer and larger revelation of the presence of God. It is open to the technical logician to object to this argument, but this is the reasoning of life. Any food that satisfies the life is looked upon as worthy. A book which moves the life in the highest direction must be looked upon as a great fact to be recognized and taken account of in the spiritual world. The book is not an arbitrary standard but a producer of life. It shows its authority not merely by what it says but by what it does. It is authoritative as a life-factor is authoritative.

X

CHRIST AND RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

We come now to the theme of Christ and Religious Certainty. For some the problem as to the authority of Christ presents no difficulties. Christ is the Prophet. We have only to read his words to know the final truth. He is the Priest. He has bought us with a great price, even the price of his own blood, and having bought us will not allow us to fall into error if we but trust him. He is the King. We have only to hearken to his commands and obey them. He is the Son of God, shown to be such with signs and wonders like the miracles and the Resurrection. There can be no appeal beyond the words set before us in the divinely inspired record, and the record is so clear that the wayfaring man need make no mistake. Multitudes have traveled along the pathway of this belief and have found rest unto their souls.

But others have had trouble. They have

been distressed by the questions which earnest and serious students have raised about every item of the accustomed statement of the authority of Christ. Christ is a prophet, but what, after all, did he say? Have we his words as he uttered them? Christ was called a priest, but how are we to conceive his priesthood in such a way as to give him authority over our thinking? How are we to meet the objections to the doctrines of atonement? Christ was called a king, but in what realms does his authority really lie? Is his word literally binding for a world whose forms of thought are far removed from those of the first century? Christ was called the Son of God, but how are we to understand the words, and how are we to meet the modern scientist's objections to miracle and to the divine guarantees which we have hitherto accepted as authenticating the record?

It would be folly in the present writer to attempt a direct answer to these questions. The direct answer must come from the specialists, from the historical and philosophical students who give their lives to mastery of the

difficulties of the Christian system, and who by great and worthy labors throw up a highway for the divine over the hills and valleys of the intellectual province. The majority of us, however, do not travel far into that province. Is there no relief for those who are somewhat troubled as to the authority of Christ and yet who cannot make the journey in company with the intellectual specialist?

We believe there is such relief. We believe that the relief comes through turning away for the moment from the formal argument as to the authority of Christ and through looking at the fact of Christ as an influence making for religious certainty. Every age must think its theological and philosophical problems in its own terms, and just at present we must repeatedly insist that the age in which we live is not busying itself so much with abstract arguments about authority as with emphasis upon the claim that certainty comes out of life as the result of a life process. Formal and mechanical authority means less and less, and vital and experimental certainty means more. We think of authority not so much as a final

statement that this or that is or is not true, but rather of authority more as an influence working for the production of living certainty. We therefore drop for the present the expression, "the authority of Christ," and speak of Christ as a force creating religious certainty. We thus come nearer to the indisputable realm of fact. For it would have to be rather hardy criticism that could maintain that Christ was not a force working for the production of religious certainty in his time, and that the thought and worship centering around the name of Christ are not a force working for the production of religious certainty to-day. This attempt of ours, moreover, has the further advantage that it does not depend upon minute knowledge of the results of criticism. We do not have to discuss the authenticity of this or that passage in the Scriptures. A recognition of the general impression which the New Testament has made upon the life of the world is enough for our immediate purpose.

We raise, then, the thought of Christ as a force making for religious certainty. In doing this we may as well keep to some of the

accustomed terms used in speaking of the authority of Christ, and so we first think of Christ *as prophet.* Our method delivers us from the necessity of trying to find the *ipsissima verba* of Christ. We do not care how much difference there may be between the method of Christ's speech as reported in the synoptics and as reported in the fourth gospel. We are not concerned especially as to whether Mark's version of the words of Christ stands nearest to the actual utterances or not. None of these things move us. But we are moved mightily by the reflection that the essential question is *not merely what Christ said himself, but what he caused his disciples to say.* If we are thinking of a teacher as a formal authority in the realms where formal authority is the final court of appeal the question as to just what the teacher says is all-important. If, on the other hand, we are thinking of a teacher as a vital force in the world of living men and living issues the question is not only what the teacher himself says but what he by the subtle inspiration of his life causes his disciples to say. So that when the critic

comes to us and claims that he has cut down the number of the words of Christ and goes on to talk as if he had thereby reduced the authority of Christ we are not greatly excited. We point out the fact that the gospels and the New Testament are here, that only a man devoid of historical sense would deny that they were produced by contact with Christ, that a prophet who can set men to talking as the writers of gospels and epistles talked is an influence for the production of religious certainty to whom we gladly expose our minds. When a foremost German scholar declares to us that the speeches of the fourth gospel are not actual utterances of Christ but rather thoughts "disengaged" by the influence of Christ, and declares that therefore the formal authority of the fourth gospel is diminished, we declare that the critic can take away the formal authority, if he wishes, so long as we have the influence. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." According to the critic this is not the actual literal utterance of Christ

but an idea disengaged by Christ. The Christ who can disengage such ideas is enough of a factor in producing religious certainty to warrant our giving ourselves to him as his disciples.

As we read through the gospels we cannot get the impression that Christ was trying to give formal instruction. The portrait is not of a man lecturing to students. There is a suggestion of levity in the thought of Peter with a notebook. The picture is rather of Christ trying by every means in his power to rouse his disciples to a grasp on certain great general conceptions in a vital way. The gist of the gospel has no great bulk. A prophet in any age takes a few vast ideas and says them over and over again, now in one form and now in another, always in such a way as to make men feel that the outward, mechanical form is not the essential. Christ seems to be striving to make men think his truth in their own minds by an inward and vital process. Whether his words are correctly reported or not, they undoubtedly come out of his inspiration, and they are valuable not only for what

they directly say but also for what they suggest. The revelation in the gospel sets men to talking. No other revelation could produce such masses of utterance without being smothered by its own product. The life which was in the mind of Christ in no way shows itself more wonderfully than in its power to prompt men to speak, and in its ability to energize the resulting mass of utterance with a vitality which makes it life-giving. It would be a mark of the vigor of the gospel simply to see it surviving so much speech, but when we see it reproducing its energy through the utterances we behold the power of the Christ as a dynamic force which claims our minds as its legitimate field.

The parables are generally conceded to represent faithfully the method of Christ in his communication of truth. Anything farther removed from the method of dogmatic instruction than the parables it would be hard to find. The parables appeal to living insight. What the parable says is of slight significance compared with what it suggests; and the suggestion is not for the mind merely but for the

moral understanding. The teaching comes out of life and deals with life. The morally alive can see the meaning, but the morally dead cannot see, even with a commentary.

If we wish a vivid and picturesque illustration of the Master's emphasis on the vital element in teaching we have only to think of that parable of the sower, which we are sure represents the Master's thought of his work as prophet. The truth is seed—not legal or scientific formula. The way to take care of the truth is not to store it away in the memory merely, but to scatter it out on the fields of human life. No doubt this is a dangerous process, for, to say nothing of the hard-trodden and the shallow and the weedy minds, the progress from seedtime to harvest is beset with romantic perils. Nevertheless, this is the way to defend the truth and to preserve it—cast it into the minds of men and then trust the entire system of things for the result! The main point, however, for us in this connection is that the Lord of the seedtime is also the Lord of the harvest and claims the harvest as his own. That which was sown was wheat. That

which comes at the harvest time is wheat. Of course, we have to compare harvest grain with seed grain to guard against the accidental tare, but the truth which comes as a result of the sowing of the Christ seed is just as truly authoritative as is the seed. The seed is the agent which has worked with the great natural forces toward the harvest time. The test of seed grain and harvest grain is one and the same—can they be eaten for the nourishment of life? All of which means just this, that the thought which comes to men as a result of the teaching of Jesus shares the life-giving property of the Master's teaching, that the thought of the saints is a product of the thought of Christ; and so long as the thought of the saint helps him to be saintly we shall not disturb ourselves overmuch with debate as to the abstract and formal authority of Christ.

For some the idea of the authority of Christ bases itself on the conception of Christ as priest. Christ has redeemed us with his own blood, and therefore has a claim upon that obedience which leads to increasing knowledge. He is our Saviour, and having given himself

for our deliverance from sin he may well expect us to rely upon him for deliverance from error. He is the spotless Lamb of God. In him dwelt all purity, and his moral purity makes him the final authority in religious truth. In these and many other forms the claim for authority based on Christ's priestliness is put.

We do not criticise this view, but we again suggest another line of approach in view of the criticisms which this claim so often meets. We lay stress upon the indubitable fact that the contemplation of the Christ makes for moral purity in the world. The question is not merely as to the doctrinal terms in which the setting on high of righteousness in the Cross of Christ is to be framed. We may disagree in theoretical statements of the work of redemption, we may debate over methods of conceiving the moral perfection of Christ, but there is one point at which we cannot well hesitate—namely, that the contemplation of Christ and his Cross has made for moral enlightenment. The vital question is not altogether as to how we are to construe the moral fullness of Christ's self-sacrifice, or how we are to

account for that fullness. We must also consider the moral cleanness which the contact with the Christ and his Cross somehow sends into the world's life. Instead of arguing merely that we ought to believe Christ because of his moral fullness, we ought at least at times to change the angle and look upon Christ as a great factor making for religious certainty through the moral insight which has been begotten by the preaching in his name. We rightly take the revelation of Christ on trust because of the moral purity which we see in him, but we also do well to think of the certainty which he has begotten in the minds of men through the purification of their lives.

In discussing the power of Christ on the intellectual life of the world we are too apt to proceed as if the problem were entirely intellectual, and so we trace the influence of this or that conception. The problem, however, is not merely intellectual. There is a moral element in the pursuit of truth, and in estimating the influence of Christ on the world's thought we must take account of this moral element. The willingness to follow the truth at any cost, the

willingness to abide by the truth and if necessary to die for it—all this is moral. The unselfishness which is necessary to arrive at certain results in thought is moral. Now, in this moral realm the coming of Christ into the world has played a transcendent part. The cleansing and purifying influences which we cannot help associating with his name have begotten a spirit which has borne abundant fruit in philosophic and political and social and even scientific thinking.

If we wished to find a figurative illustration to suggest Christ's influence upon the thought world through the moral forces which we cannot help connecting with his name, we might be pardoned if we said that Christ was the sterilizer of the intellectual instruments against evils which would vitiate their work. We know that it is not necessarily the surgeon with the finest instrument to whom we would most willingly intrust the life which can only be preserved by a critical operation. Nor is the surgeon who is famed as the most skillful necessarily the one to whom we would turn. In these days, when the secrets of aseptic pro-

cedure are a part of popular knowledge, we would say that the first requisite is that the instrument be absolutely clean. The mind that discovered the secret of making the instrument surgically clean was as truly a benefactor as the mind that found a way to put on a keen edge. Surgery strode far forward on the day when scientific cleanliness became a part of the world's knowledge. Operations which could have formerly meant only death mean life now. If this illustration does not jar too much upon our feeling of reverence we may say that the forces which we inevitably connect with the name of Christ have made for a new cleanliness in the world's thinking. It is increasingly possible to sterilize the intellectual instruments, and thus to cut away errors without danger of throwing the whole mind into fever. An unclean instrument carries poison. The deeper it can cut the more harm it will do. An unclean mind is more dangerous the sharper it is, and an ordinary mind, working with clean edge, is a safer instrument for getting at the truth than is any unregenerate genius however brilliant, but the regen-

erate genius is indeed a gift from the God of truth.

All this, however, seems rather negative. There is a more positive aspect. Any figure which speaks of moral cleansing in terms of physical cleansing is inadequate. Moral insight means power, the power which comes out of high vitality. It means the ability to respond to an intense quickening. Purity is not merely like the condition which results when an instrument is wiped clean. It is the moral life lifted up to the greater intensities.

The Master has made us believe that the pure in heart shall see God. Suppose we think for the moment of the power of seeing. Even physical sight means power. The conception of the seeing power as a mirror upon which objects are passively reflected is outdated. Seeing means a high power to build and rebuild and build again on the part of the mind which sees. The images which float so easily before our vision are not passive reflections. They are creations fashioned to the minutest lines by an agent of unimaginable industry. To be sure, the mind is conditioned

by the physical instrument, but the fundamental fact is the activity which is back of the sight. The development of the power to see is not merely the development of an eye. It is rather and much more the training of the mind in attention and concentration and discrimination. Trained observation is an intellectual power, not an eye-power, and an intellectual power of high grade. A teacher has wrought a great service for his pupil when he has taught him to see.

Now, suppose we take a step further and look at that purely intellectual seeing which has no reference to material objects. Take the mind's seizure of the idea of God, for example. From the strictly intellectual standpoint the idea of God has simply *to be thought.* There is no picture upon which the imagination can rest. When we speak of God as a Spirit, and go on to talk of nonspatiality and timelessness, we are dealing with terms which call for pure thinking. A student in this realm of philosophy once complained that when he began to think of spiritual substance which could not be pictured he experienced a sort of "falling

sensation." It takes a strong head to move in the sphere of theistic metaphysics without dizziness. And this is the justification for the feeling that atheism, which cannot get above material and physical terms, lacks strength. Really to take hold of the idea of God from the metaphysical standpoint and think of Spirit in spiritual terms requires no little intellectual vigor. The idea of God is the product of a high degree of intellectual energy. We cannot contemplate the idea of God—from the purely intellectual standpoint, we mean—without marveling at the mental power which has put it forth.

To bring this line to its point and application, we wish to say that the moral apprehension of God in that deep conviction which believes that he is and that he is the rewarder of those who seek for him through doing his will requires the highest strength of all. Mightier than the power of the eye to see, mightier than the mind to think God, is the power of the moral nature to see God through purity of heart. The soul is not a passive mirror. It is an active agent, and the force which can see

God comes out of the moral power which is uplifted and enlightened by the forces set at work through Christian influences. When we rightly look the problem squarely in the face we find no mightier instance of the force which we link with the name of Christ than this power to beget, through teaching and through life and through the holy love set on high by the Cross, the purity of heart which can see God. The intellectual daring of the pure heart in its attitude toward God is a wonder of wonders. The pure heart no sooner attains a new moral insight than it dares demand of God subordination to the same law which it puts upon itself. The pure in heart no sooner discover new obligations for themselves than they dare to bind the Almighty with these same bonds. The progressive moral improvement of the idea of God is a vital process ever going on, and we need only the slightest familiarity with Church history and the most meager acquaintance with the lives of the saints to see that the dynamic which brings this improvement about is contact with the teaching of Jesus and attempt to catch the spirit of his

thought and life and sacrifice. Great as is the metaphysical idea of God as an intellectual feat, the moral conviction which sees God in an unshakable belief that he is Holy Love is greater still. The moral force which holds this view in the mind of the world in the face of all the hard facts which make against it is an evidence of that steady vitality which streams forth from the life which we connect with Christ. So long as we are within the stream of that vitality we may well leave debates as to the theory of the atonement to those who are better trained for them.

There are others to whom the authority of Christ always suggests his kingship. They recognize that knowledge comes out of action. Instead of speculating overmuch about matters too high for us, they say that we should take the commands of Christ as authoritative and go forth to do his will. As we do his will we shall learn all that it is necessary for us to know of the doctrine. The commands of Christ are very simple. Follow them out, and follow them out to the letter, and we shall learn enough.

There is no need to try to withstand the force of this claim, but it can be much better stated. As ordinarily put the impression made is of the commands of Christ as a sort of set of military orders whose meaning is very specific and clear. We have all sorts of simplifications of the commands of Christ, but the most careful perusal of any and all such simplifications would convince us that in reducing the will of the King to orders they have emptied Christ's words of much of their meaning and power. The commandments of Jesus, taken as if they were positive military or legal injunctions to do this or to do that, are not in any large sense a solution of the problem before us. The words of Christ are too much in the language of life to allow of their being often used as hard-and-fast commands. The question is a life-question. The vital point is this: What did contact with the Christ make men think they must do? What did familiarity with him give them an impulse toward doing? It may be that this impulse could never be stated in hard-and-fast terms. It may be that the disciples worked not from any minutely conceived plan but

from obedience to impulses begotten in their souls as they went about doing the work of their Master. Men of action do not always work with the end clearly in sight, but as we study a consistent statesman's life, for example, we feel that in given situations his impulse will always move in a given general direction. Now, life is too vast and complex to get any one set of rules which will serve in all circumstances. The wise general does not always tell his lieutenants just what they shall do. He acquaints them with the plan of his campaign and by his own energy or magnetism fires their souls. They have an impulse to do the very best they can under any and all circumstances, but what they will do depends upon the circumstances. And so the King of kings commands men in this living way. The study of his life and the attempt to live in his spirit and to pray in his name do as a matter of fact beget an impulse toward a certain type of activity, and out of the activity comes increasing knowledge. But the relation of the King to the activity must be conceived in terms of life. A great personal impetus comes

out of contact with the King. And real kings in all ages have succeeded in just this way. The king—the real king, that is, and not some puppet or hereditary accident—keeps his kingdom moving not so much by dictating orders as by generating enthusiasm. The leaders of history are never understood from their words alone, or even from their words and deeds. *The power to make men feel that they can do it*—this is the mark of the king. And the power to make men really believe that they can live pure lives and win others to such life is the mark of the kingliness of Christ. At first glance the Christ character seems impossible of reproduction, but the impulse to strive after that character comes out of contact with the King himself. The impulse sets toward a communion with God which seems impossible, but with the approach toward the apparently impossible life goes approach toward the apparently impossible knowledge.

The Christian conception of the kingliness of God seems at first simply a dream too good to be true. The idea that the great God over all, the Power by which the worlds are, the

Force in all things, the unescapable Energy in whom we live and move and have our being—the idea that this great Being is, after all, the great Moral Hero of the universe, that he is the bearer of the heaviest weight of every burden, that he has willingly assumed the terrible responsibilities of Creatorship, putting himself under bonds to make peace in anarchic and disordered human lives, that he loves even the least of men with an everlasting love, that he has poured forth his life in real suffering that we may enter into his life, that his chief glory is a Cross that he would not escape if he could and could not if he would—whence did this idea get into the consciousness of the race? Not from the philosophers, for to many of them it is a stumbling-block and to others foolishness. Not from dreamy and impractical doctrinaires. Rather from those who have willingly gone into the sorrows of real sacrifice and, in the name of a King whose magnetism centers about his Cross, have felt the knowledge welling up within them as they have looked toward God. The idea comes out of Gethsemane and Calvary and is renewed there

day by day in the hearts that dare to die to self that they may find life for men.

But by this time, it may be, some one is impatiently declaring that, after all, we believe in Christ because he is the Son of God, that he wrought miracles, that he rose from the dead, that he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and is himself God of very God. It is what he is that makes his revelation true.

We, who think of ourselves as among the believers of the Church, find in the great creedal statements concerning Christ an expression of our own personal conviction. We must, of course, allow scope for varying interpretations and permit reverent scholarship to search the records and to study psychology and history for all the light possible upon the problems raised by the Christ-life, but we find nothing in the results thus far to compel the Church to cut out of her statements the real heart of their meaning. Holding, then, as we do to the great essentials concerning Christ, it may be permissible to look from a slightly different angle at some things which have always been believed about him. Suppose we consider

creedal statements as effects produced in the human mind and try thus to find some fresh measure of the power of Christ on the thinking of his followers. Take the thought of Christ as a worker of miracles. The wonder is not merely that Christ could work miracles, even if we make them as little departures from the ordinary as possible, but also that people ever thought he worked miracles. No amount of evidence could make us believe that just any ordinary man could work any sort of miracle. There is something of the miraculous in the very credibility of the miracles of grace and goodness attributed to Christ. The critic may tell us that the miracles are simply attempts on the part of the followers of Christ to state in their largest terms the effect which the surpassing personality of Christ had made upon their minds. To which we may be permitted to reply that the impression must then have been very tremendous indeed. The life of holy love in him must have been indeed irresistible if the disciples thought that nothing even in the system of things could stand in its way. The life must have been mighty too if all

through the ages Christian thought has somehow felt that extraordinary power over the material is a natural accompaniment of the spiritual power in Christ. Or take the thought of the Resurrection. No matter what the terms in which we put our belief in the risen Lord, so long as we leave a heart of reality in it. The miracle is not only that Christ appeared to his disciples, but the fact that all through the ages men have thought that he appeared. The critics may tell us that the belief in a risen Lord came about because the power clinging to his name led to the assumption that Christ was still alive. The belief in a resurrection was an effect of the power of Christ, in other words. A good deal of an effect, one would think. We do not often have to resort to such explanations of personal power. The explanation is of value as suggesting that these extraordinary beliefs would not be credible concerning an ordinary man. If Christ so struck the minds of his followers that the after effects were a series of visions that showed him as still alive, he must have struck hard; and if the impression of his life on the consciousness

of the world to-day is such that it seems natural to believe that he appeared to his disciples after death the impression must be very deep indeed. The belief in the Resurrection, even the fiercest critic of the supernatural would admit, is an effect of the impact of the life of Christ on the mind of the world. No matter how much the evidence, it would be almost hopeless to try to convince the world that any ordinary man had risen from the dead. Such reappearance would seem out of harmony with the system of things. The fact that we can believe in the resurrection appearances, on any explanation of them, is a tribute to the dynamic force which was in Christ. And take still further the belief in the essentially unique divinity of Christ. The philosopher and the scientist have demolished this belief so often that the repetition of the demolition itself becomes an argument. A belief that has been killed so often and must be attacked anew in every generation is a good deal of a belief. The belief in the Incarnation in Christ has survived so often unsatisfactory explanation by its friends and cogent refuta-

tion by its enemies that we overlook the simple significance of the fact that the belief is still here, living on in the face of the logical and philosophical and critical objections so skillfully urged against it. There must be vigor somewhere to account for this persistence. If men had begun to talk about any other person in the field of human history as much as they began from the first to talk about Christ such person would have been long ago talked into oblivion. Even if every word uttered about such a character had been friendly the interest in him would not have survived the discussion. Men would have become tired long ago. But Christ survives both favorable and unfavorable discussion. He thrusts himself into the forefront of every era's thinking and must be repeatedly explained. Some critics explain him away in every generation, but he comes back, and it is necessary for the explanation to begin anew. Such necessity of repeated explanation is a hint of the life which is somehow in the thought of Christ.

The point to which we have been coming, however, is this, that the vital fact to keep

before us in discussing the divinity of Christ is just the pressure on the minds of the followers through the centuries for larger and larger explanation of Christ. The same term is used but with an ever larger meaning. The earliest gospel writer began the account of the Christ life with an abrupt opening of the public ministry. One later writer felt that he must start from David and another from Adam. The fourth gospel finds it necessary to get back to the beginning of all things. As Christianity took the mighty leaps forward the writers seemed to feel that they must start farther and farther back to get a momentum which could project the explanation as far forward as the conquests. The real heresy was and is not so much hesitation to use the age-old terms as an unwillingness to put into those terms the largest meaning which the thought of every advancing day can supply. The heretic is not so much the man who will not say "God" as the man who will not put into the word the largest idea which the time can find. The heretic is not so much the man who is slow to speak of the divinity of Christ in the accustomed terms

as the man who will not load those terms with the weightiest meanings that he can lift. Real loyalty to the Incarnation of God in Christ is to make the truth mean the most possible to man and to God. And this is to be obedient to that onrushing vitality in the belief in the Christ as that vitality touches the tingling lives of the saints. If we could in this life find a final meaning for the divinity of Christ we would have in our finding disproved the divinity, for the supreme characteristic of the divinity is this enormous pressure of life toward larger meanings. The real authoritative power is this compelling spiritual force.

Where, then, shall we find the word which gives us the true start as we think of the authenticity of Christ? Where but in the word of which the fourth gospel makes so much—the Life? This does not mean merely the historical career of Jesus. It does not mean merely what he said or what he did. It means all this and more. It means the Cross, for we think of the Cross as the exposure of the most sensitive life-center in the universe—even the heart and conscience of God. It means the lives of fol-

lowers, the invisible body of Christ which is his Church. It means all those influences everywhere which are loosened and put to work by prayer in the name of Christ, and all the powers which are permeated by the spirit of Christ—in a word, the vital resultant of all the forces which can be in any real sense called Christian.

What Christian life calls for it is entitled to take. It must not take error, of course, but the Christian life does not call for error. The life fashions for itself institutions and it fashions beliefs. If a belief nourishes the life the belief is held fast. If a belief cramps the life the belief is cast aside. The doctrines which we have incidentally mentioned have their real authority not alone in the reasons which can be formally advanced for them, but much more in the effectiveness with which they have ministered to life. The life itself is the final aim. Out of this the beliefs come and to this they must return. The life which is begotten by the influences which we think of as really Christian stands in its own right. It is the final authority. It has the right of way.

The living Christian experience, with its needs and cravings and aspirations and insights, is the ideal and standard. Evidences and reasons and systems have their place, and their place is to minister to the life. In so far as they do this they are produced by the Christ power and take their authority from him, not merely because of what they say, but because of what they in turn produce. Beliefs are not to be judged altogether by their logical consequences, but are to be tested also by their life consequences.

The argument for the divineness of Christ once turned largely around the power of Christ to satisfy the needs of men. Men were thought of as having certain inevitable yearnings and aspirations. The divineness of Christ was shown in his power to satisfy those needs. There is not a lack which he cannot fill. This argument has not lost its force, but another argument is coming forward—the power of the preaching of Christ to create the needs of the heart, to stir men with unspeakable discontent and with insatiable hunger for the best. Christian life is the great creator of demands

in the human soul. Christ is life. Demands grow out of life. The demand for a newer and deeper knowledge of the Scriptures to-day is created by the life which is Christ. The insistence upon better applications of the gospel to social needs, the passion for larger life for world-wide humanity—these are not merely cravings of the human heart which the life in Christ can satisfy; they are tumultuous demands which the presence of Christ in the lives of disciples has begotten. The man who turns against these demands and reproaches them or ignores them knows not what spirit he is of.

The apostle thanked God that neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Men sometimes draw back from increasing intellectual and moral life as if it could separate from the love of God. They are afraid of theological discussion, and of larger individual and social applications of the gospel, and of the general progress of thought and life in the great throbbing world. If these stirrings really come of life and make for life they cannot separate

from Christ, but must rather bring to a better and better understanding of him, for all spiritual life currents spring from him and to him they must return. He comes that men may have life and that they may have it more abundantly. The living Christ is the one unescapable spiritual force which we must take as authoritative in the deepest and fullest sense. We believe in him as alive because of what such belief brings to pass in our own lives. Yesterday, to-day, and forever the life is the light of men.

XI

UNUSUAL INNER EXPERIENCES AND RELIGIOUS CERTAINTY

We have discussed with some fullness the various factors which play upon the soul to make it certain of religious truth. There are some special types of inner experience which have always seemed to religious thought to carry with themselves the mark of certainty, and these do not always seem the direct resultant of the various forces which we have considered. Some believers speak of the "inner light" as the self-evidencing witness to the truth. Others speak in more general but just as positive terms of "assurance," and others still of the "witness of the Spirit." While there is more and more agreement that no truth, even if it be the direct teaching of Church or Scripture, can be of avail for the individual except as the individual works the truth into his life, there is also a widespread feeling that some inner experiences of the in-

dividual have of themselves especial power to beget certainty. These are often so independent of external authority and suggestion that they seem to be preëminently direct witnesses to the presence and power of the divine.

We look first at those remarkable experiences which have been at the heart of mysticism throughout all the ages. There is no room for doubt that souls here and there throughout all time have entered into states of consciousness in religious meditation and devotion which have been far above the normal. There can be no doubt that these experiences carry with them an unusual force as witnesses to realities beyond themselves.

In estimating the real value of these experiences as witnesses to religious truth we apply our usual test. Do they mean life? Do they come out of life and make for life? Do they make for fullness of soul-power? Is the soul more of a force after than before? Do they carry with them an impulse out toward the largest and highest spiritual reaches?

Judged by this test some spiritual experiences fall at the outset into the category of the

insignificant or worse, while others rise into vast importance. We see at once that any religious force which is likely to spend itself in mere enthusiasm is not of considerable importance. The activity set at work is not of a high kind. The howling of the dervish, for example, does not represent any activity except that of the body excited to such a degree that the soul sinks into insignificance. The remark of a worshiper at an extravagantly emotional religious meeting has almost pathetic significance in this connection. This man had found vent for ecstatic excitement in prodigious shouting. After he had sunk back exhausted he felt a horrible fear creeping over him that he had "shouted all his religion away." Religious experience which spends itself in great bursts of emotionalism is apt to be shouted away.

In another class of experiences, however, the outcome is different, and it is by their outcomes that such crises must be judged. The experiences of prophets and saints and mystics which have left an abiding effect on Christianity were an exaltation of the faculties to a

lofty degree. The visions were not mere extravagances of deranged nerves, but were visions really worth seeing. In many instances the result of the dream was a transformed nation. When the prophets dreamed they dreamed with their eyes open and with all their sensibilities alert. Moreover, they manifested that high form of spiritual power which we sometimes think of as static rather than as dynamic, but which is nevertheless a resultant of enormous soul activities, namely, spiritual balance. Balance does not mean passivity, but rather activity.

This, then, is the test of spiritual experiences claiming the highest certainty because of an immediacy which they profess to bear: from what range and quality of life do they come and what activities do they loosen? Are they followed by an advance of the kingdom of God or by a shrinkage of that kingdom? Do they give the impulse to any kind of expansion? We must remember constantly some implications wrapped up in the truth that the mind has its being in its activities. The mind is not a passive receptacle, but a working

agent. How much of truth it will receive will depend upon how much truth it can think for itself by an active process. The quality of the truth too will depend upon the quality of the mind. The truth will be shaped to the grasping intelligence. The degree of certainty will ultimately depend upon whether the whole life can use the truth. The test is whether extraordinary life follows the extraordinary experience. One mark of full life is that propensity to spiritual seizure which we call faith.

It is very significant that the great spiritual uplifts of the Christian saints have been will-crises. The crisis has come at the climax of heroic or persistent doing of good or has attended some sublime self-surrender in the face of a mighty task. Quite often those who dedicate themselves to lives of service, such as work in foreign missions or in other spheres beyond the ordinary in demands upon the spirit of self-sacrifice, find at the moment of consecration some unusual illumination. This is more than the mere nervous relief which comes with the settling of the will into place for the task.

Too much of spiritual significance is involved for that. So it has often happened that those who have given themselves to difficult tasks and then have afterward wondered in the midst of their duties if they have not been mistaken about the "call" have often taken a new grip on themselves and on their problem by remembering the illumination which attended the moment of consecration. We cannot rule out such experiences as not having a peculiar self-evidencing value. They mean too much for the life of the worker, and this outcome in the life of the worker counts. We can see how a man might be grievously mistaken in applying such a course of reasoning as this to his particular situation, but we are speaking of the general question.

Another believer bases his religious certainty on the answer to prayer. If the prayer life is conceived of as a magical incantation which brings material blessings to the prayer-maker without involving the entire life of the prayer-maker we rule out answer to prayer as a factor in religious certainty at once. We think of prayer, however, as a very intense

form of activity involving necessarily the entire life, if the prayer is at all sincere. Take even the thought of prayer as petition for material things, or for the welfare of a friend. The prayer can hardly be sincere until it involves the entire life of the petitioner. If it is a sincere prayer the petitioner will use his mind, asking himself repeatedly if the object for which he prays is the best. The heart of the petitioner is sincere, asking itself if the petition in any sense comes out of selfishness and if it is able to say, "Thy will be done." The will is the will of sincerity, anxious to go to any length to bring about the results prayed for. In most cases we can see that the prayer would be answered by a reinforcement of the will of the petitioner and by an enriching of his life out toward the object sought for. The prayer might be answered by putting the object prayed for within reach. If putting the object within reach means simply giving the petitioner a longer reach is not the prayer answered as truly as if the effect were directly upon the object? And does not thinking of prayer in these terms make for larger life than

any other conception? We live only as we act, and the answer to prayer which involves the most of activity on the part of the petitioner is the truest answer.

Here some one may protest that all this is merely reflex, and that by speaking as if the results were altogether reflex we have robbed prayer of its power to produce certainty as to the existence of a hearer of prayer. One objector when told that the main effect of prayer for bad men was to arouse the good men to a sense of their responsibility toward the bad men replied that if the reflex influence were all he would just as soon pray to a blank wall. He failed to see that even in reflex influences, so called, there must be something strong enough to bend the force back upon the petitioner. A prayer flowing off into empty space would hardly do this. We get light here by asking ourselves how much good would be likely to come from a prayer deliberately addressed to a blank wall. It is in the assumption that the prayer reaches the life of Another that the power of prayer lives, and as long as such prayer is followed by beneficent and life-

giving results the petitioners will continue to act upon the assumption that there is One who hears and answers. In the life results that follow such assumption lie those evidences of the reality of the unseen which come out of prayer.

We would not have it thought that by the above paragraph we mean that the only answer to prayer is "subjective" as distinguished from "objective." We mean first that any answer to petition involves a stimulus of the entire life of the petitioner, and that this quickening is itself an answer. Moreover, even where an answer seems to come directly without the activity of the petitioner we must suppose that in so far as the prayer counts at all it counts because the life of the petitioner, setting in a full flood in a particular direction, makes a spiritual fact, or creates a situation among the spiritual forces which must be taken account of. A petition which is merely articulated breath may be dismissed for all spiritual purposes, but if we must believe for the satisfaction of our scientific demands that even the breath waves started by such a peti-

tioner have to be taken account of, much more may we believe that in sincere prayer the spiritual life-throbs beating out toward a desired object have to be reckoned with. If we believe in physical system we may believe also in spiritual system. If we believe that the physical system to some extent waits on our initiative we may believe also that the spiritual system waits on us. If it be said that in thus assuming that the Power back of all things has to some degree to rely upon our help we are gratifying an impulse marvelously akin to egotism, we reply that it may be so, but that when we see life following such assumptions we believe that life and truth are synonymous. Many interlocking assumptions are wrapped up in the Christian thought of prayer: the idea of the existence of God, and the idea of God as the God of Christianity, and the idea of ourselves as of value to God, and even the idea of God as waiting on the will-attitudes of men. But these assumptions are in the path of life, and we hold fast to them and take increase of certainty from them. By their fruits we know them.

If, however, our conception of prayer is to remain on the plane of petition it does not involve life deeply enough, for life is more than petition. My life with other persons is essentially communion, and religious life at its best must be communion with God. Prayer in the sense of communion must involve the whole life, and must especially touch the will. The key to all understanding of the divine is through the divine will. He that doeth the will cometh to the knowledge. Here as everywhere else vital knowledge grows out of experience. The worker in any field comes to a peculiar knack as the result of his practice. This is true with all forms of activity, from day-labor to the flights of artistic genius. An engineer once explained his neglect to look at a timepiece to tell if his locomotive was on time by declaring that he did not need a timepiece—he could tell "by the swing of the engine." Most vital knowledge comes as we learn the swing of the engine. Nothing is more disappointing than to read the explanations by successful men as to the secret of their success. The secret cannot be told,

though often the biographers seem unaware of the impossibility. The secret is in the subtle power of the successful life to feel and find its way unerringly as a result of long experience. Just as the nature-lovers or the artists or the skilled artisans come into a fine communion with the objects of their lifelong endeavors, so, only in an intenser and rarer degree, do the doers of the will of God become certain of God. Their own explanations and descriptions of their experiences are often very disappointing. As we come to know their lives we feel that there is more in what they say than would appear on the surface. They attain to an awareness which cannot be described, but which is the very heart of the certainty.

We come into most vital communion with our friends by comradeship with them, a willingness to work with them and for them. This comradeship is especially quickening to the mind and heart. It brings sentiment out of the realm of the dream and romantic fancy and keeps its feet on the earth. Walking thus on the earth, the sentiment takes on a solid

worthfulness which nothing can shake. Communion with God means comradeship with God, and all the understandings which come out of comradeship. The Scriptures seem to suggest this when they speak of walking with God. The Christian's certainty does not arise, as does the Oriental's, out of absorbed and trancelike contemplation. It is begotten by walking with God. Just as a man reveals himself in his inner purpose and nature on a long journey, so God reveals himself as we walk with him—that is to say, as we leave the realm of mere contemplation and move along his pathway, keeping step with his will. The answer to prayer in this wide sense is not some one detailed result to which we can point, but rather the general influence which streams into life as the result of doing the will of God. Often the best part of the response of our friends to us is not anything which we can repeat in words, or even anything which we can describe. Rather is it the spiritual impressions which we have experienced as very real and yet as altogether elusive when we attempt a description. So when the critic asks

us to point to an instance of answer to prayer we reply that answer to prayer is one of those pervasive spiritual realities which cannot be pointed at. If the critic insists on proof of realities back of the experience of the saints we can only point to the saints themselves. If the critic is still not satisfied we have to say that for us the results of the communion with God which the good man professes are enough. We cannot believe that true life comes from believing that which is at its center false. If the critic should insist upon arguing with the saints he would probably not get response which would satisfy his logic, but he could hardly succeed in raising any questions which would disturb the saints. For them the certainty of the presence of God comes out of religious awareness.

Recurring to the high experiences with the discussion of which we started, we remark now that we cannot place limits upon these experiences, and so long as they come out of holy living we feel no need of placing limits upon them. So long as they make for life they are worth while and carry in themselves

the witness to their own truth. For the saints this sense of the presence of the Divine is enough. For the bystanders who are not so saintly the life of the saints is the only argument. In dealing with skeptics we can fairly challenge skepticism, if it is really consistent with itself and finds a consistent expression in life, to match the life of the saints.

Before we pass from the certainty-producing power of inner experiences it may be well to add a word as to the clearly marked consciousness of a definite conversion from the life of evil to the life of good. We mention this because some, in insisting upon the consciousness of the life of the Divine in human hearts, confuse the satisfaction which follows right living with a definite break or upheaval in feeling which sometimes marks the beginning of new spiritual life. We can hardly see how a career of outbreaking evil could be suddenly abandoned without an accompaniment of the unusual or the unaccustomed in thought and feeling, especially if the break were brought about by some dramatic climax in the life of the transformed man. It would, however, be

difficult to find sufficient reason for making an upheaval in consciousness which might conceivably thus mark the beginning of new life the standard for all life, or for considering such upheaval a superior sign of the reality and certainty of religious truth. The man whose abandonment of wrongdoing has been marked by violent penitence and by almost ecstatic sense of relief does not, indeed, need argument to convince him of the reality of spiritual forces; but he must not take his experience as the sole or even the chief type of religious certainty.

We are growing to recognize more and more clearly that the ideal is the life which goes out toward right doing from the beginning; that the true organ for religious certainty is the mind which has never lost its innocence; that the more we know about evil the less we can know about God; that the scars of evil-doing are ineradicable except by long processes of healing companionship with the Divine. A mind that has shunned evil may not be able to testify to startlingly definite crises, but the settled conviction of

such a life as to the reality and presence of God is of superlative evidential value.

The recognition of this truth will lead us to lay more emphasis on fineness of feeling and exquisiteness of taste as organs for the reception of the divine. The purer, subtler shades of divine meanings are not apt to be those which can be shouted from the housetops into the ears of all the passers-by. There is an aspect of divine revelation as rare as any of the revelations which bloom from the artistic impulse. A divine art characterizes the highest messages from God. If we are to lift our thought of God up to the highest—and we must do this if we are finally to satisfy ourselves—we must see in the growing reliance upon fineness of feeling and of religious taste something of a revelation of God himself, and we must think of God as revealing himself especially to those keener susceptibilities. Now, while it is impossible to place bounds upon the divine grace as it deals with the soul that has passed years in rank transgression, yet our deepening moral sense demands that we shall not treat sin so lightly

as to teach that sin makes no difference in the final consequences. We must see the devastation wrought by evil especially upon the fineness of the life. We must put over against the dullness of sight of those who have been unclean or selfish the keen discernment of those who, in spite of infirmities and momentary lapses, have never really fallen into intentional evil. The testimony of one such who can see is worth more than the testimony of all the others who cannot see.

The ideal life, we repeat, is the one which from the beginning serves God. Such a life may not be able to tell the date of any spiritual crisis, and yet may feel settling down into itself as a deposit from the daily doing of the deeds of righteousness a certainty which nothing can shake. A pure soul is the true instrument of spiritual apprehension. The activities are intenser. The demands of the life are more insistent. We must not think that the seizures of such a soul are inferior in tenacity of grasp to those of the more clamorous who have departed into sin and then have come back to righteousness with loud

emotional upheaval. The development of the religious sense is intricate and delicate. The presence of evil can set back the development. We do not mean that those of this rarer life are not conscious of evil. The saints of the most blameless life often feel agony over sin most poignantly. They see aright the ravages of sin. They see aright the distance between the piety of any man however good and the goodness of God. And such souls, we repeat, are the organs of revelation. In their light we see light. What their lives call for must have the right of way. By the weight of the goodness of their lives they attain to an authority among their fellows. The beliefs which nourish such lives must be on the path to reality. The statement may be inadequate, but the heart of the belief must be true. By their fruits we shall know them. We shall recognize the saint by saintliness, and the belief which produces the fruit of holiness must be close to the centers of reality.

XII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is now time for us to gather up into more connected statement some of the suggestions which have appeared along our way. We conclude that Christian belief is both root and fruit of Christian life. The belief consists in the body of assumptions which the life must have for its own self-preservation. The religious consciousness makes room for itself. The fundamental fact is the life.

First, we insist upon room for objective fact. We must know the facts. We must have the most hospitable attitude toward scientists and historians and critics. Only, we insist that the assumptions at work in the discovery and interpretation of fact shall be brought out into the light. When we read that the proper basis for reconciliation between science and religion to-day is to allow science first to find the facts and to arrange them in systematic order, then to allow religion to estimate the

value of the facts, we remember that science cannot move at all without demands and assumptions and atmospheres and expectations. These are legitimate themes for discussion by the theologian, both in themselves and in their bearing upon the results likely to be obtained. The real battle between religion and science is to be fought out not so much over the detailed facts as over the backlying assumptions. So when the biblical student tells us that we are to let the scientific critic determine the facts for us we reserve the right to suspend judgment until we are sure that there is no preliminary battle to be fought over the assumptions. Since assumptions play so large a part in the discovery and interpretation of facts, we are within our rights in attempting to make the assumptions clear at the start. After we have examined the assumptions we shall be ready to look at the detailed pronouncements of the critics. Back in the sixties a school of biblical criticism professing to be most scrupulously and scientifically objective arose in Germany. This school took the Hegelian doctrine of thesis, antithesis, and

synthesis as absolute and unquestionable. On this basis the New Testament was rearranged, gospels and epistles assigned to various hitherto unsuspected authorships, the book of Acts divided into a Pauline and a Petrine section, and the chronology of the books adapted to meet the needs of the theory. While New Testament scholarship has passed beyond the view of this particular school, it would be hazardous to affirm that any type of New Testament criticism is much freer from assumption than was the Hegelian school. Subjective demands are very potent in the critical handling of all biblical questions. Suppose we were to consider that passage in John in which Jesus is reported as calling upon God to glorify him with the glory which he had with the Father before the worlds were. We should find the utmost variety of interpretations. One student would take the words as referring to a conscious personal existence before the beginning of the Christ-life on earth; another would rule this out as self-evidently absurd, and speak of ideal pre-existence; still another would say that the

words were the recollections of a reporter writing years after the event; and still another might insist that the words were interpolated by a later hand. In each case the inner demand would play no small part in arriving at the conclusion. We are open to the facts—only we want the assumptions clear from the start.

We insist also upon the necessity of room for the efforts of the logical faculty to render systems of theology self-consistent. The function of logic is to take the assumptions which spring out of the religious demands and to rid these of contradiction and to fit them together into system, bringing them out definitely into the light and arranging them in order. We insist that logic moves by its own rules and is final arbiter in its own sphere. The limits we place upon formal logic are these: it must not think of itself as the whole of mind; it must not think that it can decide against a belief which transcends logic as it can decide against a belief which contradicts logic. The logical activity is one of the activities of human life, and as such must be recognized

and utilized. It is not the chief activity, however. It can better serve thought by recognizing its own limitations than by assuming a right to rule which it cannot make good.

The religious demand is for the satisfaction of the highest and fullest life. Our view gives us a chance to recognize the great outside influences which have played a part in the shaping of religious belief. Anything which makes for the broadening of human life makes for the broadening of religious doctrine. The discovery of a new land, the invention of a labor-saving machine, the general change in an economic situation, the triumph of democracy in war or at the polls, the painting of a great picture, or the rise of a school of artists in music, the spread of intelligence—these and a thousand other factors like them may overthrow an old item of creed and lead to the shaping of another. Anything which broadens life will enlarge the creed in the sense that it will at least put larger meanings into the creed. Take the word "God" itself. After the announcement of the Copernican system, or

the discovery of America, or the invention of the printing press, or the political revolutions of America and France, or the industrial revolution in England, or the paintings of artists like Raphael, or the rise of the public school system, it is necessary to subtract from and add to our idea of God. This is not done by formal decrees of councils. It is done half-consciously or unconsciously by the religious life processes of humanity. We are not content to have our thought of God remain cramped when our thought of everything else is expanding. The process is slow but very real because very vital. Consider the single idea of the relation of God to nations outside the sphere of those that have from time to time regarded themselves as his particular peoples. Our thought of the love of God for the heathen, as we call them, and of his providential working for them, is not yet such as to do us especial credit, but this idea has met vast change for the better throughout the centuries. The change has come not through formal argument so much as through a long line of historic forces of which the publication

of the book of Jonah was an early manifestation and the Russo-Japanese war a later revelation.

Of more importance still in shaping the creed by life process has been the actual experience of those who through all the years from the beginning have constituted the real Church, the invisible body of worshipers. Some of the critics of the Church have failed to see the essentially organic nature of the Church. They could hardly have been expected to think of Paul's figure of the Church as the Body of Christ, but they have erred through not thinking of the Church as an organism. They have regarded the creeds as artificial productions put together by crafty priests. They have failed to note that every important statement in the creed had its historical justification and was in its own time good. The crudest theory of atonement which ever came to any large measure of acceptance by the Church had at its center a moral purpose which the Church felt she must keep alive.

The catholic beliefs have come out of life.

They have in their times met the needs of life. They have themselves been alive, and have died only as they gave birth to better belief. The massive convictions of the Church are the outcome of something different from arbitrary decrees. We are not pleading now for any authority except the authority of spiritual influence. We admit that the Church has many times exercised her right in altogether too material a fashion, but making all allowances we must conclude that the authority of the Church is the authority of a vast spiritual organism making demands in the name of spiritual life. The call of two hundred million men for bread is an authoritative revelation that bread is a necessity of life, no matter what some speculating chemist may conclude to the contrary. The appetite of a living organism for some truths is an authority as to the necessity of those truths for human life. This does not mean that the Church has any large claim to authority in details of conduct outside the moral essentials which all recognize, or that the technical formulation of a belief can be made literally binding forever.

It does mean, however, that the fact that men who come into touch with the Church through any vital bond feel that the pressure of moral and spiritual needs makes the demand for the satisfaction of these needs imperative and authoritative. The very demand is an indication of a power to satisfy on the part of the outside Reality. The faith of the Church is the evidence of things not seen. The very fact that an immense organism of mankind, living throughout the ages, has had faith and been able to keep the faith is an authoritative revelation that the faith has been begotten by a Power beyond ourselves—authoritative because without such assumption the faith would die, and faith stands in its own right as a part of human life. Faith will look upon any assumptions as essentially true which enable it to live.

Of more importance still are the religious insights which have become part of the furnishing of the human mind through the religious genius of gifted individuals. The part played by the genius in the realm of religion is akin to the part played by the genius in any

other realm. The genius is dependent upon the life around him, and at the same time the life around is dependent upon the genius. An inventor sometimes contrives a machine which is so manifestly a blessing to the men of his day that they speak as if the invention had come in response to a demand. The time might have demanded, however, without response if the inventor had not been at hand. So with the religious genius—the man with extraordinary insight. He seems at times to have seized truth for which the age has been long calling in half-articulate syllables, but the age could have called in vain if the genius had not been near to hear.

The genius absorbs ideas mistily floating in the air of his time and bodies these forth into definite expression. The final result may be a hymn or a new turn in ecclesiastical organization or a fresh phrasing of a truth, like some of those profound insights the early fathers uttered to the everlasting benefit of the Church. The test, however, is as to whether these utterances have come out of life and whether they bear upon life. If the

assumptions of the religious genius seem to be necessary for his own highest life the Church has always been willing to look upon these assumptions as authoritative, though the ordinary mind may never awake to the awareness of the divine which makes the assumptions necessary. The ideas which can produce a seer or prophet, which when dropped into life make for the rich saintliness possible in the Church's spiritual leaders, are justified by their results, as wisdom is ever justified in her children. If the beliefs produce giants the beliefs must lie close to the springs of reality. If the crown of all realities is a kingly human life, if the realest truth is the truth of a life, the beliefs which nourish life have a title to being in league with reality which nothing save the decay of life can shake. That decay comes when the belief ceases to be a matter of life, when the inner spirit dies and only the husk remains.

We again enforce our general conception by appeal to that Life which is the center of the Christian system. Jesus spoke of himself as the way, the truth, and the life. The doing

of his will, the walking in his way, leads to truth, and the truth bears witness to itself in life. Jesus came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. This means full life, of course; it means a place for material interests even, and for all the delights of earthly existence. But it means more. If we are to find any sort of perspective and criterion for the doctrine which we have been preaching in this essay we have to assign different values to different kinds of life. Else the libertine might say, "I give myself up to physical appetite, and the resulting satisfaction bears witness to me that I have the truth." Or the intellectualist might say, "My manipulation of the syllogism satisfies me, and therefore I have the truth." Or the devotee of any kind of art for art's own sake might declare that we had made a basis for his plea that the worship of beauty apart from any moral consideration is the sure path to the truth. Or any man with a whimsey or an aberration might come and say that he finds in his one idea the satisfaction which convinces him that he has the sole idea. The im-

portant fact, then, is not only that our beliefs come out of life. There is the further question as to what kind of life, or rather whose life, for this matter must be brought to a personal and concrete basis before we can get far.

For us, of course, the answer is close at hand that the life is revealed in Jesus Christ. Only we must be careful to make the word "life" inclusive enough. We include more in the life of Jesus than our fathers did—since we look upon many realms with favor which they regarded with suspicion. We find a place for recognition of the beautiful, for example, for which some of our ancestors had little toleration. We see too that the growing life of the race is detecting higher and higher reaches of moral life in the revelation which came with Jesus. We see the force of the teaching that the highest life comes with cutting ourselves off from some lower forms, that the energy may be most economically applied to the loftier problems. But there is something beyond all this. We often take the life of Jesus as consisting chiefly in what he

did and taught. The importance of the passive side of his life, the significance of suffering, the marvelous alertness of his feeling against evil—all this is rather minimized in our thought to-day. Yet this would seem to be very nearly the secret of the revelation which came in Christ. The abundant life of feeling which we see in Christ, the body of sentiments, the surrounding atmospheres which the reader of the gospels senses rather than definitely discerns—these are that heart of Christ out of which come the issues of Christian life.

The kind of life which the spirit of Christ quickens in us we look upon as having the right of way as the compelling force in belief-making. We cannot take Christ's recorded words and find in them full guidance for all the detailed complexities of our modern existence. But study of the words of Christ will quicken our minds for to-day's problems. The value of the words of the Christ lies in their infinite suggestiveness. Not what they say but what they suggest—this is important. So with the life of Christ and the wonderful sweep of his feeling—not what it actually is

in the New Testament record, but what it prompts our lives to, the quick liveliness, the unremitting pressure—these are the essentials. Out of this pressure comes that demand for larger and larger life which I have dared call the principle of religious eminent domain, the movement toward religious expansion.

Life has been defined as the adjustment of inner relations to outer relations. The definition is more a crude and bungling description of life in one of its phases than a definition, and sometimes seems to mean that the life process consists in adapting organic life to the outer environment—making ourselves fit in with our surroundings. If the environment be taken in such large way that God is included, well and good; but in general we have to reverse the process and avow that life is really working over the environment to fit our inner needs. It is so especially with the Christian life. In the name of life itself we stand against some facts even when we recognize them as facts. We protest, for example, that the visible things are not final. In the name of life itself we demand room in the

universe for the vital assumptions even if we have to reconstruct the universe. We are perpetually tearing down and building up in the name of larger and fuller life. Christ speaks in the name of humanity's highest life. His authority is the authority of one who comes in the name of life.

How, then, does religious life actually proceed in belief-building? Consciously or unconsciously the mind makes its assumptions. If these conflict with plain matters of fact they are given up. If they violate any of the principles of reason they are given up. If they are out of harmony with the catholic convictions of the race they are viewed with suspicion. If, on the contrary, they minister to life, if the life itself becomes deeper and fuller, the life itself witnesses to the beliefs. We hold fast the beliefs until reason for doubt appears. If we must give up the belief we do not give it up as false if it has really ministered to life, but as less true than some newer conception to which the growing life urges us. Always, always, always, the fundamental fact is the pressure of the underlying life itself.

From this the belief comes and by it the belief must be tested. The Christ who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly inspires us to make any assumption which the Christian life calls for and to hold fast to this assumption as true until reason for doubt appears. If we do the will we shall know the truth.

We conclude, then, that in the search for religious certainty we should cease to expect any abstractly infallible standard which will settle all questions. No such standard can be found and no such standard is needed, for religion deals primarily with life and not with mathematics. The issues of life abide in the realm of practical certainty rather than in that of abstract infallibility. We sow our grain and reap the harvest in reliance upon nature in a spirit of trust. We should find it hard to prove to our satisfaction that the sun will rise to-morrow morning, but would find relief in that the sun might rise while we were debating. The family life would be impossible except on a basis of mutual trust: the thought of infallible proof is ridiculous here. Hus-

bands trust their wives and wives their husbands, and both venture forward with faith in the training of children. The industrial and political and social systems know nothing of abstract infallibility. Now, religion is life at its best and highest. If faith is so much of ordinary life it must be the very core of religious life.

Moreover, we require only a moment's reflection to realize that this is as it should be, and that the glory in life consists just in the practical certainties which are won by doing and trusting. Absolute infallibility and wooden predestined sureness would take all the zest from existence. Such infallibility would eliminate at a stroke all those convictions which result from moral training and moral insight. It would be the death of religion. If truth were blazoned visibly across the sky the moral life would suffer irretrievably. When Jesus was teaching on earth he took infinite pains to use such language that only the spiritually minded could understand him. He did not dare to speak too intelligibly. To have done so would have been to sweep into

the ranks of his followers many of the wrong sort.

Suppose the veil which screens off the future could be for a moment lifted, permitting us to see something of the life to come. Let us assume for the moment that we could have, if God so willed it, a glimpse of the final reward of the good and a glimpse of the final loss of the bad. Let it be indubitably revealed even to eyesight that the righteous are to gain life and the wicked to lose. What would be the result? Any movement that might thereafter come toward righteousness on the part of evil might come solely from fear of punishment or hope of reward. A kingdom thus increased by the inrush of newcomers without spiritual motives would need an immense dismissal, allowing the reward and punishment to become again so completely matters of trust that those who lacked trust would drop out. Heaven could not assimilate an immigration of citizens who might not come in a spirit of faith.

We say further that not only do we make mistake in trying to find certainty in some

abstractly infallible standard, but we are wrong in trying to find it in any one thing. If we may be allowed a mathematical term we may say that religious certainty is the *function* of many factors. No one force is sufficient. Religious certainty is the resultant of many forces working together.

There is need of fixing this thought firmly in our religious reflection. Even when men are able to see that there can really be no abstract infallibility in the religious realm they are not always able to see that practical certainty cannot be found in any single element, and so they keep searching for some one factor out of which the certainty arises. We have been led astray by these partial views. Certainty comes of the total life, but the factors which make life possible are too many to be enumerated. There is needed to-day on the part of theologians more of a synthetic and comprehensive spirit. The theologians have run to specialties. We are in somewhat the same plight as that in which the study of life-giving forces in the world of nature has placed us. Various theories prevail to-day as

to the prevention and cure of disease. We have emphasis on scores of remedies, on baths and massages, on mental attitudes, and even on the importance of thoroughly masticating our food. It would please some minds to take any one of these various methods of attaining to physical health and to erect it even into a religious observance. Quite likely every method which professes to promote health has some virtue. The difficulty appears when any one method is taken alone. The wise practitioner seeks for the good in all the methods. Restoration to health might in some instances come as the resultant of them all.

Just as we need in medicine a return of confidence in the old-fashioned general practitioner, so we need in theology an interest in a comprehensive ability to see all the life-factors which work for the production of certainty. Or just as we need at all times in warfare the strategist who can sweep into view the factors in the entire field of campaign, so we need breadth of vision in the theological field. Just as we need statesmen and industrial captains whose strength lies in grasp on all

the factors of a situation, so we need comprehensiveness in the theologian. We have had critics and specialists in abundance. We now need theologians who can look beyond a single specialty and fit together into statement the various factors working together for the maintenance of religious life. We must do the will of God if we would know the truth, but in doing the will of God we must not so emphasize one factor as to exclude another. The Church has her part, and the Bible its part, and the individual personal experiences their part, and the outside forces, too numerous to mention, their part also. We are dealing with life. Who can say that this factor or that is the only agent in the production of life?

Life is a vague term, and yet the very recollection that we are dealing with life helps us to keep our balance as to religious certainty. We cannot have a final formula where life is concerned. All the attempts to define life in formula have ended in ridiculous inadequacies. So when some inquirer protests against the silence which meets his demand

for abstract formula we must remember that sometimes silence is a sign that there is too much to say. If Christianity is life at its highest and best there is no way of condensing it into formula. Simplifications are good enough as laying emphasis on this factor or that, but there is really no simplifying of Christianity as long as it is alive. And this just because anything alive is complex. The very fact that we can make no compendious statement may be an indication of the life of our belief. We cannot completely understand Christianity as long as it is alive. It partakes of the general mystery of life. The very fact that it provokes to so much questioning, however, is an indication of its aliveness.

Just as we cannot appeal to any analysis of life to settle our problems for us, so we cannot appeal to precedents as final, for it is true of Christianity as of all other living realities that she is constantly revising her own precedents. That is to say, everything she does throws light upon her past and revises that past. The Scriptures have to be reread in the light of fresher and fresher knowledge. Of

course, the words are the same and abiding, but the meaning is fluid as long as the system is alive. And we cannot predict what the life will in the future call for. We may be sure that as long as Christianity is alive she will take whatever truth she finds anywhere. When new worlds are discovered Christianity will appropriate these in the name of her Lord. Whatever modifications are made in thought to bring thought nearer reality Christianity will forthwith seize for herself.

But what about error, after all? Some error will be sloughed off in the life process. Some error will cling for a while in parasitic dependence on the life, but the life sometimes shows its vitality in its ability to carry the parasites. Some error will be deliberately cut out, but in general the Church will deal with error by deepening the springs of the life. As we reach in our doing closer to the truth we shall find that the error will disappear. It will not survive in the changed conditions as they move on toward larger and larger life.

We end as we began. There is no abstract standard of religious certainty outside that

realm where the deductive intellect draws its important but rather scanty conclusions. The issues are the issues of life. These issues do not come from any one center, though they all at last must play upon the will. Anything whatever which influences the will of men to the doing of the will of God is in so far an agent of religious certainty, but no one can state all these influences. It is for us to give ourselves to the living of the religious life and the certainty will take care of itself. It is true yesterday, to-day, and forever that he that willeth to do the will of God shall know of the doctrine, whether it be true.

In one of the Resurrection stories we are told that as the disciples beheld their risen Lord on one of his appearances they heard his voice saying, "Handle me and see." The hand is the instrument of the will serving to correct the impressions of mere vision and to keep men close to the great outside forces. We do no violence to the symbolism of the story when we reflect that there is a mass of will activities in the world to-day which constitute for us a manifestation of Christ. As

we bring our wills into touch with these we find a corrective which keeps us from the aberrations of that type of vision which sometimes shows an inclination to get away from reality. Some skepticism dies of itself as soon as the hand lays hold upon the life activities of the kingdom of God. We find here too a corrective of feeling. We do not fall into morbidness when our wills are busy. We are like the bystanders at a fearful disaster who lose their sickening sense of distress as soon as their hands reach forth to relieve the stricken. By handling, that is to say, by setting our wills to do the work of living Christianity, we come to a peculiar certainty about Christ and the power of his life.

In these volitional activities speculation gets a firm base, feeling is kept healthy, and the Church is held away from foolish aberrations and asceticisms. But we must remember that the springs of life are within, that the driving force is the inherent passion of the soul for larger life, that this force must not be allowed to dry up into a kind of barren practicalism, that the outward activities must

be the expression of inner stirrings. It was the love of the disciples which opened their eyes to the presence of the Christ. It was his response to that love which sent them forth with a vital message for a world which needed life. They kept the balance between the promptings of the inner spirit and the corrections and qualifications and elaborations which came as they wrought with their hands to build and bless. And out of it all came that gospel of life which convinces us that the whole man, in all his powers, is himself an instrument for the seizure of truth, and that the truth in its final statement is fullness and richness of life. The whole man is the instrument and the whole man is the end.

And now, after all that has been said, some will feel that our putting of the grounds for religious certainty does not constitute an argument. Some may look upon our statement that religious life moves in a realm above the strictly logical as a surrender of all claim to be logical. We do not make such surrender. We believe that the view which we have presented is logical—not in the sense

that it moves with mathematical exactness, but in the sense that it is in harmony with the reasonableness with which the mind makes itself at home in the universe. In fact, the mind imposes itself so completely upon the system of things around us as to make scientific constructions which are, it may be claimed, entirely opposed to the facts as they present themselves to our senses. Moreover, great systems of idealism have been, and are, possible in the realm of high philosophy, and these grow out of the demands of the mind. Our argument is this: That the entire life of man has the right of way; that it is entitled to such conceptions as will make it at home in the universe; that back of our beliefs there must be some adequate cause; and that if the total effect of the belief on the human life is good the cause must not be merely equal to the effect, but must be as good as the effect. Under the influence of some conceptions we see characters becoming more and more solid and substantial. That which makes for solidity of character cannot itself be empty and vain. "By their fruits ye shall know

them." We know no better logic than this. If the fruit is nourishing, the leaf and the limb and the trunk and the root which produce it must lay hold upon reality. The substance of the fruit is drawn from the system of things, and the juices of the fruit are distilled from the life currents which flow from the heart of reality. This may not be formal logic, but it would seem to be at least good sense, and upon good sense Christianity rests its claim.